The Prisoner of Mademoiselle

Charles G. D. Roberts

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle

A Love Story

The Complete Works of

Charles G. D. Roberts

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle	$1.50
The Watchers of the Trails	2.00
The Kindred of the Wild	2.00
Earth's Enigmas	1.50
The Heart of the Ancient Wood	1.50
Barbara Ladd	1.50
The Forge in the Forest	1.50
A Sister to Evangeline	1.50
By the Marshes of Minas	1.50
Complete Poems	1.50
The Book of the Rose . cloth, *net*	1.00
limp leather, *net*	1.50
Songs of the Common Day (*Out of print*)	1.00
In Divers Tones (*Out of print*)	1.00
The Book of the Native	1.00
New York Nocturnes	1.00
A History of Canada . *net*	2.00

PUBLISHED BY

L. C. PAGE & COMPANY

Boston, Mass.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_T4-APS-728

"HELD IT OUT ACROSS THE RIPPLING WATER"

(*See page 22*)

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle

A Love Story

By

Charles G. D. Roberts

Author of *The Watchers of the Trails, The Kindred of the Wild, The Heart of the Ancient Wood, Barbara Ladd, Poems, etc.*

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY

Frank T. Merrill

Boston

L. C. Page & Company

1904

Copyright, 1904
By L. C. Page & Company
(incorporated)

All rights reserved

Published October, 1904

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Fog	1
II.	The Lady of the Footprints	12
III.	In the Unknown Wood	25
IV.	The Blockhouse in the Clearing	32
V.	The Furtive Visitors	46
VI.	Mademoiselle Anne	52
VII.	My Lady Difficult	64
VIII.	The Word from the Blockhouse	75
IX.	The Mission of Lizette	92
X.	Spells and Counter Spells	106
XI.	Father Labillois Plays His Part	119
XII.	The Prisoner of Mademoiselle	130
XIII.	Mademoiselle and Her Prisoner	142
XIV.	The Plight of Gil	153
XV.	The Managing of His Excellency	159
XVI.	Confidences	173
XVII.	Father Labillois Is Troubled	187
XVIII.	His Excellency Obliges His Niece	198
XIX.	How Gil Is Made to Understand	204
XX.	The Ghost in the Loft	220
XXI.	How Zachary Is Made to Understand	229
XXII.	The Sanctuary of the Sunrise	250

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle

CHAPTER I.

THE FOG

BY a sudden sharp pitching of the boat Lieutenant Zachary Cowles was awakened from his uncomfortable sleep. Clutching at the damp gunwales, he sat up between the thwarts, whither he had slipped down in his weariness during the night. Staring about him with the sleep yet thick in his brain, he shouted twice, but with an air of little expecting an answer.

As he grew well awake, it seemed to him that the fog which shut him in on every side was sticking in his throat, or even that his

voice, however vigorously he shouted, declined to venture away through the white, enshrouding vapours. The whimsical notion took him that his calls, terrified at the ghostly obscurity, did no more than slip over the boat-side to cling beneath the dipping and sliding gunwales. Then, slapping a handful of water into his face to clear his brain of such fantasies, he sat up upon the thwart, and laughed aloud at his folly in taking the trouble to call. He knew that his ship might like enough by this time be two score leagues away.

A little before noon of the day preceding, his ship then lying becalmed in Fundy mouth about half a mile off the northwest corner of the coast of Acadie, Lieutenant Cowles had taken the gig and rowed alone toward shore. Strange as it may seem, the shore he sought being a hostile one, it was with the captain's leave that he had started on his solitary enterprise. The ship was the *God's Providence,* a sturdy, five-gun brig of Boston. The ship's company, for the most part, was made up of a band of Massachusetts sailor-traders, who had set out to make reprisals on the trouble-

some French settlement of Port Royal, and incidentally to gather such trophies as might come their way. To every man of the company it was known that at this time much treasure of fur and plate was rumoured to be hidden behind the sodded ramparts of Port Royal; and this rumour, be it said, had done not a little to fire the avenging ardour of their patriotism. But to the captain, one Master Nathaniel Seery, of Plymouth, there had come by devious ways a tale of gold and amethyst and malachite, to be found on a certain distant corner of the northwest coast of Acadie. This tale he had conveyed, under pledge of silence, to his friend Lieutenant Zachary Cowles, whom he knew to be at the same time adventurous and prudent, a loyal gentleman and, though of great estate, not too proud to take further profit of fortune's favour. On this occasion, then, when calm sea and full tide were found conspiring to hold the *God's Providence* just off the point where, as Captain Seery conjectured, the treasures might most reasonably be sought, it was judged well that Master Cowles should make his expedition unattended.

"There'll be more gold there, Zachary, than

we have any reason to look for," said Captain Nathaniel, "if there's more than enough for just the two of us." And with this sentiment Zachary Cowles had found himself in laughing accord. There was no more rashness than fitted with his spirit in going ashore alone, seeing that that coast for miles about was known to be desolate, and they were yet some hours' sailing from the hornet's nest of Port Royal, which it was their desire to smoke out.

Had the company of the *God's Providence* been better acquainted with those Acadian waters, Lieutenant Cowles might have set out less hardily on his venture. He would have known that two perils might beset him, either one liable to tax his resources to the utmost. He had never experienced the incredibly swift turns of the Fundy tides, whose drifts and cross-currents gave anxiety to the wariest Acadian pilots; and he had never even dreamed of the suddenness of the Acadian fogs. When he left the ship it was slack tide, and she lay idly swinging in water too deep for anchorage. A clear sun cheerfully flooded her trim spars and rigging and white decks, and gleamed on the long brass swivel mounted in her bows.

The shore, a line of broken gray and purple rocks surmounted by dark-green forest, wore a countenance of encouragement in the cordial light; and to Lieutenant Zachary it seemed an easy thing which he had set himself to do that sunny noonday. As a matter of fact, he was even then on his way to the learning of a lesson which nature loves to teach to the gay and confident, that mischief brews most briskly behind a mask of cheer.

Rowing a strong and eager stroke, the adventurer had covered perhaps two-thirds of the space between ship and shore, when his keel was caught in the grip of a tearing current, and over his shoulder he saw the rocks slip past at a marvellous speed. Next he noted that the ship was smoothly moving away in an opposite direction; and from this he concluded that the tide had changed, leaving him in the clutch of a strong shore eddy. Not greatly disturbed by this, he nevertheless made note of it with some care, considering how it might affect his return to the ship. Then he scanned the shore for a landing-place, the boat being by this time swept far past the little inlet for whose mouth he had been steering.

Observing no point quite practicable, he set himself with mighty strokes to stem the exasperating eddy and work back to the inlet. A very few minutes of such rowing as made the veins stand out on his forehead proved the futility of this effort, and, resting on his oars, he turned to look at the ship.

There she lay, trim, beautiful, and familiar in the clear light, though, to be sure, somewhat startlingly farther off than he had expected. But as he looked the distinctness of her outlines was dimmed. It was as if a veil had been cast over her. He rubbed his eyes, thinking that the shine of the water had perhaps dazzled them. Then, in a second, bank on bank of white clouds, thinly ragged along their upper edges, closed about the ship and engulfed her. For a moment or two the tops of her masts showed above the rolling vapour. Then these also vanished. It was as if she had been blotted from the face of the sea.

For a moment or two it was more in wonder than in apprehension that Master Zachary watched this ghostly oncoming of the cloud. In every direction the surface of the tide, now grown on a sudden gray green and oily, was

vanishing under the thick white pall. There was an indescribable menace in the soft celerity, the insidious silence, the impenetrable whiteness of its approach. In a second or two the shore itself began to fade. This aroused the solitary oarsman to a sense of his peril, and, wheeling the boat sharply, he began rowing with all his strength toward the point where, as he guessed, he had seen the *God's Providence* disappear.

The next moment the fog closed thick about him, and he felt himself alone with silence made visible. Not two boat-lengths from the stern could he see, and a certain chill crept in upon his confident spirit. Feeling very sure of his course, however, this but lent the more vigour to his oarstroke, and he dashed on, with set lips and heavy breathing, till he concluded that he must be near the ship, or at least within hailing-distance. He stopped rowing, and was gathering breath for a mighty "Ahoy," when heavily through the fog came the boom of a cannon.

His jaw dropped with amazement and dismay. The sound, instead of coming over his bow, distinct and close at hand, was directly

astern and bewilderingly remote. He knew the sound right well as the voice of the long swivel in the bows of the *God's Providence*. He knew that the ship was signalling for his guidance through the fog. But how was it possible that he should be so completely turned about? There was something very daunting to his spirit in the fact that all his vehement striving had served but to carry him the farther from his goal, the deeper into the peril of which he now began to realize the full significance. With painstaking calculation he turned the boat square about, paused to assure himself (with absolutely no means of assurance) that he was right, and then resumed his rowing with an energy more violent than judicious. So violent was it, indeed, that within half a dozen strokes he smashed a thole-pin, and fell backward sprawling.

As he fell, he struck his head on the thwart behind him. It was a rude buffet. He got up half-stunned, with a singing in his ears, and so confused that he quite forgot to allow for the change in his course which such an accident would cause. Hastily putting in a new thole-pin, he fell to rowing again with

undiminished confidence, till suddenly the summons from the ship came once more thundering thickly through the fog, and he stopped with oars hanging in mid-air. The sound, this time, was even more distant than before, and seemed to be on his extreme left. Even of this, however, he felt uncertain, the moment the ponderous reverberations ceased. The blow and the fog together had completed his confusion; and it was now with distinct hesitancy that he once more attempted to set his course. Nevertheless, as soon as he had done so, it was not in his nature to hesitate. Committing himself fully to the hazard, he rowed for some minutes at top speed, — and when the gun called to him again through the white gloom the sound was not only faint with distance, but apparently on his starboard quarter. Then he realized that he was lost.

Even so, however, he preferred doing to waiting. For a minute or two he experimented cautiously, turning the boat this way and that to determine the drift of that sinister, leaden-coloured current which was all that he could see beyond his gunwales. Then, having satisfied himself that he was at last going with the

current, and therefore accomplishing something, whatever that something might be, he settled down to a bout of dogged rowing. His brows were knit, his jaws were grimly set. He was bent upon arriving somewhere.

By this time all signals from the ship had ceased, from which he properly concluded that either the drift or his misapplied energies had carried him beyond ear-shot of even the long brass swivel. By and by he noticed a change in the light which filtered through the pall of the fog, and realized that the afternoon was wearing to an end. He kept on rowing, however, till at last the darkness shut down upon him. This, to his impatiently angry nerves, was an actual relief, as it made the fog invisible. Mere darkness, however thick, was something he knew, and felt at home in; but the white impenetrability of the fog had chilled him by its strangeness.

For some time after nightfall he kept on rowing. Once he came within sound of breakers, and his trained ear recognized the voice of a menacing coast whereon it would be impossible to make a landing in the dark. After considering till the loud threat sounded

close under his bow, he turned about and rowed hard till it had faded to no more than the ghost of a memory. Then, having hauled in the oars that he might ponder awhile upon his most strange and disquieting situation, he was so heedlessly weary as to fall asleep, forgetful of every peril of reef or tide.

CHAPTER II.

THE LADY OF THE FOOTPRINTS

OF his awakening the story has been told. As he came completely back to the possession of his wits, he felt that, cold, drenched, cramped, and hungry though he was, he was fortunate to have slept through a night which must otherwise have bored him so intolerably. Of the perils through which he had come safely he thought little, having had experience in many an uncertain bivouac. He had come safely through them, and he therefore cast them behind, forgotten. Now, however, he set his numbed hands briskly to the oars, having caught the sound of breakers on either side.

From the pitching of the boat and the nearness of the sound, he knew that he was in a narrow, tumultuous tideway, presumably between an island and the mainland; and he

made such shift as he could, with no guidance but that of his ears, to hold a course midway between. In a few minutes the noise of the breakers receded, and he emerged into silence and smooth water.

For a time, now, he was content to drift, trusting to the tides to solve his riddle for him. He tried to smoke, but found his tobacco wet. Then, for an hour or thereabouts, he rowed at haphazard, to set his chill blood flowing; but presently he desisted and laid down the oars with a slam, on reflecting that this stimulating exercise would add fuel to the vain hunger for breakfast which was by now consuming him.

For an hour or two he drifted. Then his heart leaped at the sound of light waves lapping on a kindly beach. He seized the oars and pushed forward eagerly. In a moment or two the gentle and welcoming noise was all about him, and he judged himself to be within the arms of a little bay. All at once a darkness rose up through the blank fog. This darkness resolved itself into comfortable masses of leafage. He saw, close under his prow, a line of red and foam-fringed beach; and with impetuous strokes he ran the boat far up upon the

sand. Not pausing to drag it to a safe distance from the clutch of the tide, he ran eagerly up the beach and shouted. Friend or foe, as he might chance to evoke, he was seeking humanity, and breakfast.

No voice replied to him; but, as if disturbed by his calls, the fog magically lifted and withdrew. It seemed as if it were being sucked up and exhaled away to seaward; and there, within so scant a time as takes to tell it, was the good sun shining down from a clear blue heaven, upon as pleasant a landscape as one could wish to see. The shores, richly wooded with birch, maple, ash, and dark-green, pointed fir, came down about a sheltered bay whose waters gleamed tranquilly in the sunshine. Offshore, the blue green, quivering levels were dotted with islands, wooded and fair.

Hapless indeed seemed his case, alone in the land of his enemies; yet he drew himself to his full six feet of stature, filled his lungs with the sweet air, adjusted the wet ribbon that knotted his brown queue, and felt boyishly interested in whatever fate might befall. Even though he was hungry, life was good. Quest-

ing along the skirts of the woodland, he came on a raspberry thicket in full fruit, whereat he eased his appetite for the moment. Then he looked to his pistols, bethinking himself that all this fairness of prospect might hide foes. Withdrawing the sodden charges, he reached for his powder-horn and prepared to reload. To his disgust all the powder was wet. The brine had soaked in through the stopper. He had no weapon left him but his sword.

He shrugged his shoulders and took this calamity with composure, having more inclination to the steel than to the dirty explosive. Thrusting the useless pistols back into his belt, he turned his face inland, having a mind to try his fortune without further delay. As he turned, he fancied that he caught sight of a slim form vanishing among the trees. He sprang forward eagerly; but, failing to get another glimpse of the alluring apparition, he concluded that what he had seen was but the illusion of a fasting brain. The next moment he quitted the broad sunlight of the beach, and found himself in the solemn, vaulted glooms of the ancient forest.

A few minutes later, as he was pushing his

way through a tangle of underbrush, the smell of the bruised stems sweet in his sea-weary nostrils, he caught the distinct sound of a keel grating on the beach. Rushing back at full speed, he burst out upon the shore. To his amazed dismay the boat was gone.

It was gone; but not far. It was floating about a rod from shore; and in it, lightly balancing the oars and scrutinizing him with a disconcerting brilliancy of great eyes, sat a slim, dark-faced girl.

"Stop! Stop!" he shouted, angrily, jumping to the conclusion that she proposed to take away the boat.

"I am stopping, Sir Englishman," she answered in French, a little derisive smile upon her lips.

"Bring back my boat, madame!" he demanded, in her own tongue, forgetting his manners in the urgency of his case.

"Oh, but no, indeed, monsieur, I assure you!" she replied; and with a couple of expert strokes she sent the boat shooting seaward.

A moment ago he had hated the little craft heartily enough; but now it seemed to him a

treasure beyond all price, his only hope of ever returning to his own country. Thinking to intimidate the saucy chit, he snatched a pistol from his belt and levelled it.

"Bring back my boat!" he thundered.

The girl laughed, — a merry peal of mockery, and very musical, as his ears could not but perceive for all his fuming.

"You would not shoot a woman, monsieur," she protested, "even though you are a Bastonnais!"

Now, as Lieutenant Zachary Cowles very well knew, he could not have drawn trigger on the maid had a crown and a kingdom been at stake; but he feared to let her see this.

"By God, madame, I would," he swore, — "under some circumstances."

"But these, now, are not the circumstances, are they, monsieur?" He looked at her in silence for a long minute, considering. What a bewitching gipsy she was! The small, nut-brown thin face, long-oval and fine-cut, the mouth not small but unspeakably scarlet, the eyes dark and full of a dancing gleam, making a miracle of radiance that went near to dazzling him into instant subjection. She wore a beaded

Indian jacket and short skirt of fine white dressed deerskin; and on her hair, which curved in thick, rebellious masses on either side of her face, half-hiding her small ears, was an audacious little cap of scarlet cloth.

Now Master Zachary Cowles, though in his way he had dallied with love some half-score fleeting times, had yet made shift, in the face of public disapproval, to remain a bachelor up to five and thirty years. Never before, however, had his eyes fallen upon anything in woman's shape that so stirred his imagination as did this slim, mocking girl. He threw down his pistol on the sand, repudiating it. What use in pretending to be a ruffian when those clear eyes so easily looked him through.

"No, madame," he confessed, "these are, in truth, not the circumstances. I certainly could not fire upon you, though my life, and many a life besides, depended on it!"

"Not even if it did not chance that your powder is wet?" she asked. And from this he knew that, behind the safe screen of the woods, she had been watching him since his landing.

"I throw myself upon your mercy!" said he. "I am a —"

"You had better, indeed, monsieur!" she flashed out, interrupting him without ceremony. And she lifted a small, richly inlaid musket which lay on the thwarts beside her.

Lieutenant Zachary bowed low, acknowledging the strategic dominance of her position.

"The brave and the powerful can afford to be generous, madame!" he protested. "I am alone in the land of my enemies. And I am amazingly hungry. I appeal to you for protection."

In spite of his surrender, there was an amused confidence in his tone. The situation, for him, had taken on a certain piquancy. But at his last words the girl's gaze grew suddenly grave and cold. She had suffered herself to play with him, for a few moments, velvet-pawed; but now she felt it was time to let him feel her claws.

"I think you hardly realize your own presumption, Master Englishman!" she said, slowly. "Whose fault is it that you are in the land of your enemies? How dare you so lightly claim protection from a daughter of

this land which you have come to harry with sword and flame? What are you so much better than a pirate? Is it hospitality, or a halter, that you deserve, monsieur?"

Having nothing to the point to reply, he cast down his eyes dejectedly, — though, indeed, they were finding it a fair occupation to watch the play of her countenance. After a moment's silence he looked up again, and questioned her face. It was inscrutable, and far from encouraging.

"Faith, madame, you have me on the hip!" he confessed, ruefully. "It is true, I came as an enemy, — but, I protest, as an open enemy, who plays fair the rude but noble game of war. Surely I am become harmless enough, as fortune has willed it. Would you see a helpless enemy starve?"

He spoke now earnestly, almost passionately, for, whatever his failure to appreciate the full peril of his situation, his craving for breakfast had become a matter of grave moment in his eyes. But as he looked at the slim tyrant, and considered how his seasoned wits and courage were at the mercy of the girl, his mood underwent another change.

"Indeed," he went on, seeing that she made no immediate answer. "I am already growing repentant, madame! It repents me, not that I have come to this lovely, though naturally inhospitable land, but that it is as an enemy I have come to it!"

Her brows drew together and her scarlet lips closed firmly. It was plain that if there was to be any touch of raillery in this interview, it was not Master Zachary Cowles that should be permitted to indulge in it.

"It pleases you to be pleasant," she said, severely. "Let me remind you that at this moment the guns of your piratical ship may be shattering the homes of my people in Port Royal."

"I pray God that no kinsman of yours be within range of those good guns!" he cried, with a sincerity that was transparently personal.

There was a faint ring of scorn in her young voice as she answered, "They are no kin of mine, monsieur, the good folk of Port Royal. I am niece of the governor. But, such as they are, they are my fellow countrymen. And

their enemies are my enemies. I must ask you to consider yourself my prisoner."

"I might consider many a fate worse, madame!" he answered, with alacrity. This, in fact, was exactly what he desired, conceiving that it would secure to him three most excellent things, — her presence, fair provender, and a mild captivity. When a healthy man has not within twenty-four hours broken fast, the impatience of his appetite is prone to make itself felt even through the most thrilling of conditions. Bowing low, he drew his sword, and, taking it by the point, held it out across the space of rippling water.

"I am much honoured to surrender my sword into such lovely, if not all gentle, little hands. But, in truth, fair lady, I know not how to surrender it, unless you will condescend to come and take it. I swim but indifferently well in these stiff clothes."

The severity of her lips relaxed ever so little. Then a mocking smile flashed over them, and she dipped her oars doubtfully. This relenting, however, was but for an instant. Her face grew cold again with swift distrust.

"No," she said, curtly. "Why should I trust a Bastonnais? They are all crafty and perfidious. Toss your sword to me here, and I will catch it!"

Zachary's face flushed red under the insult. For a moment he stood silent. Strangely enough, he felt no less hurt than angry. The affront was peculiarly bitter coming from her, who, as he had flattered himself, might have discerned his breeding. At length, gathering his wits, he thrust the sword back into its scabbard.

"Thank you, madame, for your courtesy," said he, bowing stiffly. "I shall keep my sword for the present, and surrender it, when I do so, to one who understands the point of honour!"

Turning on his heel, he stalked up the beach, hot with his indignation.

"Are you English, then, so nice on the point of honour?" he heard her ask behind his affronted back. "Pray pardon me if I wronged you. I counsel you to return and surrender to me, lest you fall into less generous hands."

Now, because her eyes had so wrought mischief in his brain, Zachary was obstinate to the

verge of childishness in his wounded pride. His manners, nevertheless, forbade him to quite ignore her speech. He faced about, therefore, and bowed hurriedly, very low; but answered never a word. Then he marched, with his fine head held high, straight away into the woods. And, when sea and shore were shut from view, still before his eyes shone the vision of that slim figure in the boat, confusing him.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE UNKNOWN WOOD

AS the green shadows engulfed him, he heard a sharp whistle from the direction of the boat. He jumped to the conclusion that this was a signal from his would-be captor, and likely to result in his being trailed and taken. This, however, should it come about through her agency, was a fate which he would be at no great pains to avoid. That he must be captured, or starve, he knew. And he was already repenting the fit of temper which had driven him from that piquant interview. Since captivity, in some form, was inevitable, he desired it in a form which seemed to promise certain alleviations. For a moment he wavered, half-minded to turn back. Then pride and petulance determined him, and he

pushed forward, loudly trampling down the underbrush. The trail he left through fern and herbage was such as no pursuer could fail to find.

Having penetrated perhaps a couple of hundred yards into the forest, he turned to the left and followed what he took to be the direction of the shore, trusting that, in case the lady of the boat should prove so cruelly careless as to neglect his capture, he might come upon the seaward path from some settlement. In the deep woods he found no more berries; but from time to time he would stop and tantalize his appetite with the sweetish scrapings from the inner bark of a young fir-tree. Reminding himself of the enthusiasm with which, in his childish days, he had regarded this insipid delicacy, he tried to make believe it satisfied him. Nevertheless, as he went on, his interest in the mocking maid of the boat and her disastrous eyes was more and more obscured by wistful musings upon the broiled fish and hot griddle-cakes with which, as he hoped, it might be the kindly custom of the Acadian peasants to regale their prisoners of war.

For all his petulance upon a petty point of

honour, however, for all his healthy concern about his breakfast, and for all his susceptibility to a red mouth and a pair of wonderful eyes, Zachary Cowles was now, as always, a good woodsman. He had no intention of losing himself and leaving it to others to find him. In a very few minutes he was on the alert to note, though half-unconsciously, every forest sign and intimation. He knew very well that the Acadian settlements were small and scattered, the Acadian forests vast, trackless, and unpeopled; and though on this benign June morning the solitudes breathed him welcome from every airy bloom, and sap-sweet bough, and green, pulsating shadow, he had no mind to put himself at their mercy. In his pursuit of woodcraft, his following and outwitting and overmastering of the wild creatures, he had learned things that made him something more than a great hunter. Mixed with the gay confidence and zest of his blood were veins of incongruous subtilty learned from his victims, and patches of philosophic wisdom which his spirit had acquired in the great stillnesses. Among the things he knew, which seemed just now pertinent to his

case, was the fact that nature, who to some moods can be the most sympathetic of comrades, is apt to be, in the hour of need, the most derisively merciless of tyrants. In this pinch, he would choose to trust the certain and comprehensible unfriendliness of man rather than the uncertain and never wholly comprehensible friendliness of nature. And it would have been reasonable to agree (had he permitted himself to consider this point at all) that within the imperious jurisdiction of the lady who had stolen his boat, no rival tyrant save nature herself was likely to be tolerated.

When one treads, knee-deep to waist-deep, the juicy, scented undergrowth of June, one travels not far without tiring. The sweet resistance conquers. Within a short time Master Zachary gave up, cast a glance at the sun through the tree-tops, and turned his steps back toward the beach, thinking to follow the easy way of the sands till some fishermen's landing-place should come in sight. No sooner had he yielded, however, acknowledging himself worsted by opposing brake and tangle, than brake and tangle, not to be outdone in graciousness, yielded in turn to him; and he stumbled

into a little foot-path, which went secretly, threading the undergrowth as a shy brook threads a deep-grassed meadow.

In the soft black mould of the path the wanderer found certain foot-marks, the light prints of very small, moccasined feet, so slender and fine that their ownership was most readily inferred. This tempting trail he eyed for a moment shrewdly, with a smile about his lips. The small footsteps led toward the shore, and none came back. He cast an irresolute glance both ways, muttered, "A wildcat's trail were safer to follow," then turned and followed eagerly toward the sea. In five minutes or less he emerged into the glare of the open beach, and peered about him hopefully, shading his eyes. Neither boat nor lady was anywhere to be seen. His face fell, and he turned abruptly to follow the path back.

"Where she came from," he muttered, the disappointment in his face changing to a smile of amusement, "may be a good enough place for me to go to."

Under ordinary circumstances, Lieutenant Zachary Cowles, in following a strange trail through an enemy's country, would have gone

like an Indian, furtively, soundlessly, and with a conscious feeling about the roots of his scalp. But these Acadians, as he conceived, were Christians in their way, though to be sure their way was one not highly regarded in the Massachusetts Colony. He went openly, therefore, in the hope of disarming hostility by frankness. Well he knew that when craft is useless it is very much worse than useless. Presently, at a distance of perhaps half a mile back from the shore, this furtive trail ran at right angles into a broader and more trodden path. He stooped and carefully examined the soft ground, till he was satisfied that the prints of little moccasins had come from the left. To the left, therefore, he turned, and hastened forward confidently. He had not gone above three hundred yards, when the dense shadow of the woods thinned away suddenly before him, and he came out upon a ragged, untilled clearing, studded with gray stumps and vivid green thickets. In the centre of the clearing stood a small, square, squat building of the semblance of a blockhouse. At the militant suggestion of this little wilderness post, the soldier in Zachary made him pause to reconnoitre before

venturing within range. As he halted, a musket-shot rang out from down the trail behind him, and a bullet hummed viciously past his ear.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLOCKHOUSE IN THE CLEARING

ON the instant Zachary Cowles sprang aside into the shelter of a thicket, and whipped out his ready sword. A second later two burly ruffians, with a seagoing awkwardness in their gait, rushed upon him. The foremost brandished a huge, broad-bladed cutlass of a foreign pattern, which even at that exciting moment caught Lieutenant Zachary's eye. The other swung his smoking musket as if it were a club.

As we have seen, it had been the wanderer's purpose to surrender at the first decent opportunity, for who was he to withstand a whole viceroyalty? But that traitorous shot from behind had banished all thought of surrender; and the truculent demeanour of these two scoundrels stirred up his wrath. Plainly it

was no prisoner they wanted, but plunder, or perhaps revenge for some fishing-boat or shad-nets destroyed by New England raiders. Their swart faces, beneath dirty caps of blue woollen, wore a set and yellow-toothed grin of vindictiveness as they came on like mad bulls.

The New Englander set his back to a tree, as if he would oppose madness to madness and singly withstand their rush. And thus they were led on to their fate. His slender sword would have availed but little to stay their clownish impetus; but, even as they thought the affair as good as ended, he stepped nimbly aside, parrying a wild sweep of the cutlass. They were not nimble, these heavy-booted fishermen. As they stumbled, clumsily checking their rush, the New Englander made a lightning thrust; and he of the cutlass, who seemed the more dangerous of the two, pitched forward with an unpleasant, gurgling sigh.

From policy no less than from inclination, Zachary would fain have spared his second assailant, and, springing back, he dropped his point, at the same time lifting his left hand with a gesture of protest. But the rascal now saw red, and rushed in with a sort of wordless

bellow. He had his wits about him, however, for he shortened his grip on his musket, taking it mid-length, and so making of it a speedy and dangerous weapon, such as no sword could hope to parry. There was nothing for it but to avoid those flail-like strokes; and, with some difficulty (for the fellow was quick on his feet), as well as with a growing anger, Master Zachary avoided. It galled him to be so kept moving, and by such an antagonist. Twice his point darted in, bright and swift as a snake tongue, drawing blood from arm and shoulder, but twice at least his own head escaped by no more than a hairbreadth. It was cloddish work, and shame swelled in the soldier's heart at what he held an ignoble situation. Yet he saw well that he would be worsted if he should relax but for a second, so he put the best of his cunning into the combat, and thanked his good fortune that he was no way scant of wind. At last, however, his chance came. His thrust went under, instead of into, the opposing arm; and no second thrust was needed. After a momentary thrill of savage exultation, he looked down with something of regret at the huddled, sturdy figure where it

lay among the green brakes, so still now, and but a heart-beat back so threatening and so furious. Then thoughtfully he dried his blade with a handful of leaves, and went on slowly toward the blockhouse, satisfied that, having manifested no interest in the late disagreement, it must be quite empty of life.

The massive door of the structure stood invitingly ajar. He knocked respectfully, then imperatively, and, getting no answer, walked in. The place was empty. But a broad bunk in one corner, half-filled with hay and a heap of blue and yellow blankets, proclaimed that it was not always lacking an occupant. The floor was roughly boarded over along the side where stood the bunk, but the rest of it was bare earth. Opposite the bunk was a rough but massive fireplace, where, from a heap of ashes, a thin blue stream of smoke curled up about the blackened bottom of a copper pot hanging from the crane. With a sudden eager moisture in his mouth, Zachary peered into the pot, hoping for some rich soup or stew, and turned away in angry disappointment when he found only water. Beside the fireplace was a clumsy wooden settle, with a black and white

dressed cowhide thrown over it; and next to the settle a rude table bearing two wooden platters. One of these platters was quite empty and clean. But the other bore the hard, meagre heel of a dark loaf, either of rye or buckwheat.

Hard though it was, the vigorous white teeth of Master Zachary made short work of the crust, which merely whetted his appetite. Espying a cupboard in the nook behind the chimney, he laid an impatient hand upon the door, which was tightly closed. It came open with a squeak, and at the same instant the big door behind him closed with a bang.

Zachary was across the room with a bound, and wrenching furiously at the solid planking. But in vain. It was securely fastened on the outside.

"Trapped!" he growled. Then turned, set his back against the door, and eyed the windows apprehensively, expecting attack in some form. There was no immediate demonstration, however. Then he muttered, savagely:

"If I can't get out, no one else shall get in!" and shot the heavy wooden bar which served as bolt. He was resolved that his prison should be also his fortress. This done,

he stole to one of the narrow windows to look out. Just as he reached it, however, a creeping sensation at the back of his neck made him turn his head quickly, and he found the muzzle of a musket confronting him in the window opposite.

Behind the musket was the mocking face of the lady of the boat. Her eyes, at this moment, were rather disquietingly cool, and her red mouth set firmly. The prisoner, however, felt a sudden comfort at her coming, an absurd sense of her being, although an enemy, yet not a stranger. At the same time a certain resentment at being trapped surged up foolishly within him.

"I am at your service, madame," he said, bowing stiffly.

A flicker of amusement passed over her face at this. Then her mouth hardened again.

"If that is the case, will you give up your sword now, monsieur?" she asked.

"By your leave, madame," replied Zachary, remembering his slight, and once more forgetful of his eagerness to surrender, "I will continue to retain it. I am no more worthy of trust now than I was an hour gone!"

"Pardon me, monsieur," retorted the girl, crisply, "but you are now entirely worthy of my confidence, being securely shut up, and quite harmless. In truth, I have a desire for your sword, and will accept it now directly from your hand."

With the last words, her voice grew less austere, and Zachary hesitated.

"Had I given it up an hour back, madame," said he, irresolutely, "I know not where my soul might have been by now, but this poor body would have been food for the crows."

The girl laughed whimsically.

"To care for your soul were all too heavy a care for me, monsieur," she answered, "but as for the poor body, it would have been under my protection, as my prisoner!"

"What an ass I have been, to be sure," thought Zachary. Aloud he said:

"I should have been quite safe, of course, under the protection of — of whom, madame, may I be permitted to ask?"

"Never mind my name, monsieur," replied the girl, almost rudely. "But you would have been comparatively safe, at least for the time,

if the outrages of your countrymen have not enraged our people beyond endurance."

"As for my countrymen," protested Zachary, stoutly, "I'll wager that they have not transgressed beyond the harsh customs of war. But as for myself, I am proud to be in your debt for my safety, madame. My captivity has this incalculable compensation, that I could not be more completely prisoner, though shut in these four walls, than, having once seen you, I should always be, though free to wander over all the world!" And, with this fine speech, he passed his hilt through the window.

To the compliment the lady paid no heed, but she lowered her musket, and silently, with lips pursed as one who weighs a problem, accepted the sword. After examining it carefully, and poising it as one familiar with such weapons, to the New Englander's astonishment she handed it back through the window.

"Keep it for me, monsieur," she said, with a certain raillery in her voice. "I have no immediate use for it. And pray polish it well, for I like not those marks upon it."

Before Zachary had sufficiently recovered himself to make rejoinder, she was gone, and

seemed to take with her half the brilliancy of the June day. So almost gracious had been her voice in those last few words that Zachary sat down and stared, unseeing, about the walls of his prison. A pleased smile lightened his face, and for the moment he forgot he was a prisoner. He even, for half a moment, forgot he was hungry. Then he remembered, and the boyish satisfaction left his face. He sprang to the door and tried it. It was still securely fastened on the outside. He was still a prisoner, that was sure, for all Mademoiselle's brief gleam of graciousness. Somewhat sourly, he resumed his interrupted exploration of the cupboard. There was nothing there but a hard and mouldy rind of cheese, which he ate with relish, a leathern pouch containing gunpowder, and a bar of lead for bullets. These munitions of war he patted with delight. There was no bullet-mould to be found anywhere, but beside the fireplace was a box containing flint and steel and tinder, and an iron ladle, which had evidently been used for melting lead, as its inner surface was streaked with silvery metal. Zachary knew he could get along well enough without a bullet-mould.

He was by this time thirsty as well as hungry, but on this point he felt no longer anxious. Being now the prisoner of Mademoiselle, with full confidence and as much patience as he could muster he relinquished responsibility to her. In one respect, however, he felt that he must look out for himself. The narrow, unglazed openings which served the blockhouse for windows were so situated as to command a view of every corner of the interior. He had no liking for the idea that hostile eyes might peer in upon him while he slept. Wrenching up some of the heavy hewn planks which formed the floor of his prison, he disposed them about his bunk so as to make it a place of complete concealment and shelter. While engaged in this task, he noticed how soft the earth was underneath the floor, and realized, though with no adequate thrill of joy, that, if need should arise, he would be able to burrow an exit to the outer world.

As Zachary stood back to approve his handiwork, he heard a scratching sound behind him, and wheeled with a start. Those open loopholes were a strain upon the nerves. Sure enough, as might have been expected where

there were loopholes to invite, the muzzle of a musket was just intruding itself. The menace of its aspect, however, was effectually softened by the fact that it bore a brown jug and a little wicker basket. These Zachary hastened to accept. Whereupon the musket was as hastily withdrawn; and Zachary found himself bowing elaborate gratitude to the space of empty green beyond the window. Behind the musket he had seen nothing more than a hand, — white, indeed, and well kept, but large, and assuredly not the hand of Mademoiselle. A man's hand, beyond peradventure.

"May I not know the name of one to whom I am so indebted?" begged Zachary, staring at the vacant window. There was no answer, except the far-off whistle of a whitethroat from a fir-tree across the clearing. Then, drawn by an irresistible fragrance from the basket, he turned eagerly to learn Mademoiselle's idea of how a prisoner of hers should fare.

The contents of the basket, whatever they were, were so fastidiously covered with the finest of white napery, that Zachary felt himself greatly complimented at the outset.

Though his appetite was ravenous, he held himself in restraint, like a wise child about to open a gift, willing to prolong the delight of anticipation. He took time to look at the crest embroidered daintily on the corner of the napkin. Then, uncovering a roasted chicken, a generous cut of cold meat pasty, a small barley loaf, a pat of golden butter, and a little bowl of some red-coloured fruit conserve which he did not recognize, he congratulated himself on having fallen captive to one who had no less appreciation of his appetite than of his breeding. The jug he found to contain a very excellent, if somewhat fiery Spanish wine, much to his taste. Having made a most comforting meal, his desires turned to his pipe, which he found safe in his pocket. But as for his tobacco — Alas, his pouch was soaked in salt water, where he had lain upon it all night in the bottom of the boat. With pensive disgust he surveyed the sodden mess, then spread it unhopefully in the sunniest of the port-holes to dry. Though it would, without doubt, be sorry stuff to smoke, he reflected that the experimenting with it, even the proving of its demerits, might serve to wile

away some monotonous hours. Just then, by some caprice, he chanced to look again into the basket; and there at the bottom, under a napkin, he found a little carved wooden pipe, and a coarse twist of tobacco. On this latter he pounced eagerly; and as he sniffed its rather crude aroma he glanced around the room with a foolish, irrepressible grin of satisfaction.

The pipe which he found in the basket was exquisitely carved, and Zachary eyed it with approval. Nevertheless it was his own well-tried consoler of many a toilsome vigil that he chose to fill and light. By this choice he showed himself yet heart-whole, for all the bewildering eyeshots of his inscrutable and imperious captor. In fact, the lady who had so unexpectedly, and it seemed effectually, assumed control of his destinies, was just now no more than a radiant but elusive thread woven into the tissue of his dreams. Unquestionably, he was alone, helpless, a prisoner among foes from whom he or his countrymen could expect small mercy. Yet as he lay on his back in the bunk, and blew long clouds of the rough Acadian tobacco, he felt ridiculously at ease, and content with this latest whim of fate. He

had none at home in Boston town to fret overmuch on his behalf. He was not worrying greatly as to the enterprise of his comrades on shipboard, whom he held very well able to take care of themselves. With wealth and leisure to command, adventure was the spur to all his action, and here he had fallen promptly upon abundant adventure from the hour of leaving the ship. Mystery was the lure of his longings; and mystery was surely all about him. It had enshrouded him in the fog upon the bay. It seemed to peer in upon him now from every little loophole with its shaft of light. He was well housed, — for which he cared not a jot. He was well fed, for which he cared emphatically. He had his sword, for which he cared more than words could tell. And though everything was so quiet about the blockhouse that he could hear distinctly the crisp fluttering of poplar-leaves outside, the stillness was of that nature which hints of interesting things to happen. However, none of these interesting things were happening at the moment, so, very composedly, Lieutenant Zachary Cowles fell asleep.

CHAPTER V.

THE FURTIVE VISITORS

THE afternoon sun rolled down the sky, and dropped in splendour behind the serried black crests of the fir woods. As the fiery gold died away to a broad wash of amber crossed by two level lines of crimson, and the upper sky bloomed softly into pale tones of lilac and aerial green, the hermit-thrushes in the woods all about the clearing began to chant their tranquilly ecstatic responses, — slow, thrilling phrases from golden flutes and silver bells inextricably involved. The cadenced enchantment stole in through the loopholes with the dusk and the dewy evening scents; but the tired prisoner slept on, only dreaming the more pleasantly for these influences. Then the hermits stopped, and the night-hawks, swooping in the pale dome of

sky, began their twanging of high, mysterious strings. And the forest night closed down softly about the old blockhouse.

Presently on the glimmering edge of the clearing a huge, dark shape appeared, slouching and sniffing. After keeping close to the trees for a few moments, it started noiselessly across the open toward the blockhouse. From those dark, silent loopholes came a savour most appealing to the bear's nostrils, the savour of roast chicken. Twice he circled the structure slowly, sniffing along the foundations for an opening. His big flat feet moved without a sound, as shod in velvet. At length the door attracted his attention, and he leaned his whole weight against it. But the massive timbers never even yielded him the recognition of a creak. Disappointed, he resumed his silent prowling along the foundations. Then, chancing to look up, one of the loopholes excited his curiosity, and he rose on his great haunches to investigate it. As the chance of the wild would have it, this particular loophole was just over the sleeper's head. As the bear sniffed eagerly, seeking that aroma of roast chicken, his confiding nostrils caught instead the

dreaded scent of man. A look of abashed alarm came into his small, cunning eyes, and, dropping on all fours, he went scurrying back across the open to the shelter of his woods.

As the darkness grew denser, the blockhouse grew less solitary, though not less silent. The furtive life of the wilds began to centre about it. Here and there a softly hurried rustling in the grasses betrayed the wary diligence of the mice and shrews. Presently a fox appeared, his brush of a tail floating behind him. He drifted swiftly hither and thither, a darker shadow among the shadows, and had snapped up two overconfident or unlucky shrews before he reached the blockhouse. As he passed close to the door the man-scent on the threshold arrested him. He sniffed cautiously, wrinkling his long, thin nose in aversion. Then he trotted off into the woods again. He would have no more of hunting with so feared and hated a foe in the neighbourhood.

The fox had not been gone above ten minutes when there was a desperate rush in the low bushes across the clearing, and a rabbit appeared, stretched straight out like a coursing greyhound, and fleeing for its life. Once

before this same rabbit had escaped by darting in through the open door of the blockhouse, whither its more crafty and more suspicious pursuer had refused to follow. A few yards behind came a weasel, hot on the blood quest. The rabbit reached the blockhouse, — but there was no door open to it. Around the dark building it ran, its heart thumping with terror; and just before the barred threshold it met the weasel face to face. Paralyzed on the brink, it stood stock-still, quivering. The weasel, springing upon its throat, dragged it down, and began sucking its blood.

Just at this moment, when the silent horror and soundless struggle had sunk to stillness, another visitor came to the blockhouse. It was the turn of the air to send some of its wandering kindreds. A pair of wide, unrustling wings floated swiftly down and across from the tree-tops. Two round, fixedly staring eyes flamed down upon the weasel and the rabbit. Two sets of talons, long, keen-edged, inexorable as steel, shot down from the fluff of feathers below those wide wings, — and the weasel felt himself clutched, at the small of the back and just behind the head, in the

very grip of death. One fierce writhe he made, striving impotently to twist his head around and fix his keen fangs in his captor's thigh. Then rage and pain and fear alike faded into blackness.

The owl, after staring about him deliberately for half a minute, began to make his meal, tearing the victim, and bolting the fragments in big, spasmodic gulps. While he was thus comfortably occupied, a tall, gray figure of a man in *habitant* homespun and buckskin leggings, came striding silently along the trail and up to the door of the blockhouse. At his approach the owl snapped his beak angrily, then rose with his prey in his talons, and winnowed off to some dead tree in the forest.

The newcomer seemed surprised to find the door of the blockhouse closed. He was still more surprised to find it fastened on the outside. After some quiet considering he unbarred it, and attempted to push it open. When it resisted his vigorous but noiseless efforts his astonishment was unbounded. For some seconds he stood pondering the enigma. Then, having replaced the outer bar just as he had found it, he went around to the loop-

hole just over the bunk. Here he listened intently for several minutes. His alert ear told him it was a man whose deep, regular breathing he heard so plainly. Also, it was but one man. Satisfied on this point, he went away as silently as he had come, and continued up the trail into the woods.

CHAPTER VI.

MADEMOISELLE ANNE

THE manor-house of the Seigniory of Cheticamp was a wide, low, irregular wooden structure, with high-pitched gables and narrow, pointed dormer-windows in its roofs, and overhanging eaves. Its white walls gleamed through the light green of apple and cherry-trees, which billowed softly around it. About its lower windows thronged pink roses, and stately blue larkspur, and creamy-bloomed syringa, and honeysuckle. From its wide front door an avenue of stiff, steeple-like Lombardy poplars led down a gentle slope to the Port Royal road.

Through an open bedroom window, framed in honeysuckle, blew in a flower-sweet air, fresh with the first cool of evening, and fluttered the white silk dressing-gown which lay

back loosely from Mademoiselle's glimmering shoulders. They were very perfect shoulders in their slim way, firmly and finely modelled, with neither dimple nor meagreness, girlish yet strong, the skin satin-soft, white, yet with a suggestion of the sun in its whiteness. Anne de Biencourt approved of her shoulders, and suffered her maid Lizette to praise them unstintingly while dressing her thick, rebellious hair. To-night, however, she only half heard Lizette's accustomed adulations.

All through the toilet she was observing her own face intently in the big oval mirror, seeking counsel from the dark eyes which looked back into hers with no longer mirth or mockery in their gaze. On the preceding night a momentous problem had been suddenly thrust upon her for solution. And now, while she pondered it anxiously, the frank face of her English captive in the blockhouse kept flitting between her fancy and her reason. Oddly enough, the counsel which she got from those enigmatic eyes in the glass seemed in some way helpful to her, or at least not distasteful. When, at length, the shadows of the apple-trees fell so thickly in the room that the eyes

in the glass no longer spoke to her clearly, she would not put up with the dimness for a moment. The hair-dressing paused. The curtains were drawn, and candles lighted on either side of the mirror. Then, the companionship of her semblance in the glass restored to her, and its sympathetic comprehension fully assured, she found herself ready to lend more attentive ear to Lizette's chatter.

The maid, a spoiled favourite and more or less deep in her mistress's confidence, imagined that she understood Mademoiselle's air of unhappy abstraction. She was far from sympathizing with it; but with all her privileges she was not quite so rash as to obtrude her difference of opinion upon Mademoiselle Anne. During her three years of attendance on Mademoiselle, one year in Quebec and two here in Acadie, she had learned that her liberty of speech lay chiefly along the lines of intelligent and enthusiastic agreement with her mistress at every point. She liked Quebec, with its crowded and hill-climbing houses, its smart soldiers, its massive ramparts, its gaieties, its air of a metropolis in little. The country she found dull, and Cheticamp village stupid be-

yond all conception of dulness. The roses and hollyhocks of Cheticamp manor were only less uninteresting to her than the tiresome woods wherein her mistress was so fond of wandering, and where, she felt sure, one must be in constant peril of snakes, and bears, and caterpillars. She could not believe that Mademoiselle's cheerful acceptance of this Acadian exile with her irascible old guardian, the governor, her enthusiastic interest in Cheticamp and the dreadful, silent woods, were anything more than a mask assumed for a purpose which that imperious little lady would some day permit her to penetrate. Meanwhile, discretion, as well as devotion to her mistress, impelled her to wear a mask herself, modelled as closely as possible on that of Mademoiselle. At this moment, while her deft, brown fingers lingered lovingly in the dark masses of Anne's hair, she was trembling with an eager hope that Anne would solve her problem in the simple way of yielding to her guardian's commands, which would speedily restore them both, mistress and maid, to the distractions of the fortress city on the St. Lawrence. Of

what was in her heart, however, she let her lips tell nothing.

It had been late that afternoon when Anne returned from her hunting, and, being tired from the excitement of having brought down such unusual and unexpected game, she had gone at once to her room to sleep. For more reasons than her fatigue she had excused herself from dinner; and now, while Lizette was dressing her for the ball which the governor was giving that night in honour of Monsieur de Viron's arrival, she was ready, in a preoccupied fashion, to hear the news of the day. Behind her preoccupation, however, was a solicitude which she did not comprehend, or even realize. Could she have been told that her real interest in such news as Lizette might have to tell was dependent upon the degree to which they might touch the captive in the blockhouse, she would have repudiated the implication sharply. Yet she might well have drawn startling conclusions from the intentness which spoke to her from those dark eyes in her mirror whenever Lizette's words bore even remotely upon matters of concern to Master

Zachary Cowles within his four walls of gray wood.

"Monsieur will be none too well pleased to be packed off to Port Royal so speedily," suggested Lizette, after a few moments of silence broken only by the caressing whisper of the brush upon Mademoiselle's recalcitrant hair.

"To Port Royal? Impossible! What do you mean?" cried Anne, sitting up with sudden apprehension. Then, realizing her mistake, she sank back again in her chair, and asked, indifferently:

"But what monsieur, child? And why is he to be packed off so speedily?"

A wiser brain than Lizette's might have misinterpreted that start, that upleaping of alarm in the mirrored eyes.

"Oh, mademoiselle, what monsieur can there be but Monsieur de Viron?" she protested archly, delighted with her misinterpretation, delighted with herself for having, as she thought, succeeded in ambuscading the heart of her inscrutable mistress.

"Who knows?" replied Anne, crisply, her lips closing to a scarlet line. "But why *shouldn't* Monsieur de Viron go at once to

Port Royal? And why *does* he go if he doesn't want to? I've been asleep, you know, child, and I have no idea what momentous events may have been upsetting Cheticamp during the last few hours."

"Why, mademoiselle, haven't you heard? Why, the dreadful Bastonnais, though they had but one ship, landed a party almost under the guns of Port Royal, and burned St. Clement's, and killed several of the poor villagers who fought them, and got away to their ship again without the loss of a man. And they stole everything they could find, — even the sacred vessels and the candlesticks from the church. But Father Labillois says the candlesticks at St. Clement's were only plated!"

"And what can Monsieur de Viron do about it?" inquired Anne, with a faint suggestion of scorn in her voice, which Lizette quite failed to appreciate.

"He can help the garrison drive them off or capture them," answered Lizette, with enthusiasm. "He can fire our soldiers with his own noble courage. In any case, he has to go, for his Excellency insists upon sending him in his own place. His Excellency is in a ter-

rible rage because he can't go himself. And his foot is very bad. It is truly dangerous, mademoiselle, to go near him to-day. But he swears the ball shall go on just the same as if there was not a Bastonnais this side of hell. He said those very words, mademoiselle, he really did."

"My poor uncle!" murmured Mademoiselle Anne.

"Yes, indeed, mademoiselle!" went on Lizette. "And he swears that every Englishman that he can catch he will hang to the tallest trees around Port Royal, for they are nothing better than pirates, he says! And at this he grows quite amiable!"

Mademoiselle de Biencourt's face paled slightly, as she thought of Lieutenant Zachary's boyish and confident face in the fatal noose; and she decided that a more secret prison than the blockhouse must be found the first thing on the morrow. She knew not what curious travellers might go down to the water by that trail, and she felt sure that her captive would never have the discretion to keep hidden unless he should chance to be asleep. All this passed through her mind in a few seconds,

while the eyes in the mirror answered her with darkenings, dilations, contractions, as resolve followed upon alarm. Then she spoke in tempered deprecation of his Excellency's threats.

"My dear uncle has a short memory, I fear, Lizette. When our Acadian privateers make a raid on the coast villages of New England, don't we, also, steal and burn and kill? And we don't call ourselves pirates, do we?"

"But, mademoiselle, it is surely different!" cried Lizette, warmly. "Our soldiers are noble, brave, good. These Bastonnais are savages, barbarians. Surely, every one knows that!"

Mademoiselle de Biencourt shrugged her shoulders with a smile of tolerance. Lizette's prejudices formed one of her scanty sources of diversion in the unfruitful atmosphere of Chetigamp, and she prized them too highly to run risk of correcting them. The element of the reformer was absolutely lacking in her make-up.

"Even the great Monsieur de Viron can hardly get at these terrible Bastonnais of yours without ships," she suggested presently, letting Lizette's contention win by default. "I under-

stand there's not one of our ships now at Port Royal. Monsieur de Viron, it seems to me, would have shown more sagacity if he had sent around to La Hêve for two or three ships, that he might fight these English on the sea, and take back the stolen treasure. Oh, Lizette, I believe we women could teach these conceited men something in the art of war! But perhaps I am hasty. No doubt the great De Viron intends to swim!"

At this mockery, so inconsistent with the solicitous concern revealed a few minutes before, Lizette was bewildered. She chose, however, to answer only Mademoiselle's parenthesis, where she felt her feet on safe ground.

"Indeed, yes, mademoiselle," she agreed, gaily, "beyond question we could teach them much in the art of war. Do we not teach them all the little they know of the art of love, the stupids, — an art so much more difficult than that of war?"

"I wish Monsieur de Viron the same degree of success in the one as in the other!" murmured Mademoiselle Anne, enigmatically.

The tone of her voice, however, was not so ambiguous as her words; and Lizette looked

with quick, searching inquiry straight into the dark eyes of the mirror. These eyes looked back with mocking defiance, and Lizette was baffled. She forgot to prattle, but fell to wondering if there could, by any chance, be another man. At this thought her heart sank for a moment, and her visions of *la belle Quebec* grew dim. When she thought a little further, however, and considered that whether Mademoiselle loved Monsieur de Viron or not, she was certainly betrothed to him, her spirit rose again. Monsieur de Viron was not a man to easily relinquish what he wanted, and there was no doubt that he wanted Mademoiselle herself no less than the rich estates which she would bring to him. And then — his Excellency!

Who was Mademoiselle, with all her sweet imperiousness and will to have her own way, that she should think of opposing that man of iron and fire? His Excellency, in his way, loved Mademoiselle, — as who did not! — and he knew best what was for her happiness. In this, Lizette felt proudly, there was a bond of understanding between herself and his Excellency, though that arrogant old man might not

know it. She, too, adored Mademoiselle; and she, too, like his Excellency, knew better what was for Mademoiselle's good than that wilful and incomprehensible lady could possibly know for herself.

Occupied with these meditations, Lizette held an unwonted silence while she finished the elaborate structure of Anne's hair, and gowned her in a low-cut gown of cream brocade. The girl's silence was lost upon her mistress, who, having learned all the news of the day which closely concerned her, was once more absorbed in shadowy, indeterminate dreams, out of which but one truth stood sharp and definite, namely, that a new prison must be found at once for the frank-faced captive of the block-house.

Meanwhile, as Anne dreamed thus before her mirror, heedless alike of Lizette's deft fingers and of the cool garden scents which drew in through the open window, far off in his rude bunk in the blockhouse the captive lay sleeping the sleep of a tired, unanxious boy; and the night-hawks were swooping with the sound of smitten chords in the dome of sky above the lonely clearing.

CHAPTER VII.

MY LADY DIFFICULT

THE mansion-house of Cheticamp was one of the oldest in Acadie, built with high gables, but wide, low-ceiled rooms. In the ballroom the ceiling seemed to come peculiarly low, almost upon the heads of the dancers, because of the amplitude of the room in length and breadth. Its floor was of polished maple, which reflected the soft radiance of the candles in their sconces along the wall. The company which had gathered here at the governor's summons, to celebrate the betrothal of his niece and ward to Monsieur le Comte de Viron, of Quebec, was small, though all western Acadie from La Hêve on the south to Piziquid and Shubenacadie on the north, had contributed. The gentlefolk of Acadie were few, but these few, though sometimes, from their

long isolation, perhaps a trifle homespun in their breeding, were for the most part choice in blood, and kin to some of the most illustrious houses of Old France. All the women were dressed richly, some in the style of the day, others in the style of the day before. Of the men, all but a couple of priests, and the governor's physician, and a thin-lipped, grave-eyed old judge from Port Royal, were in full uniform and wore an air of imminent departure. The men, indeed, were few as compared with the women, all the officers of the garrison except one of the governor's aides being on duty, and the gentry of the coast seigniories along Fundy and Port Royal Basin being on guard, lest the audacious and elusive New Englanders might make a descent upon their villages. It was the governor's orders only that kept any men at the ball, for every hand that answered to a sword-hilt was fretting for action. Every hand, that is, but one. The Count de Viron had no great enthusiasm for departure. The long, tedious, and difficult voyage from Quebec he had taken for desire of Mademoiselle Anne, and he had no mind to be dismissed from her side within twenty-four

hours of his arrival. The raiding of one small New England brig upon a few Acadian villagers seemed to him a small matter where his personal desires were concerned. Himself a veteran of the Spanish wars, with more than one achievement in the Low Countries to his credit, he had no concern to prove his prowess here in Acadie, and moreover he had a shrewd suspicion that no glory was to be won off the crafty New Englanders. The governor, however, in selecting him as his personal representative at Port Royal, had left him no choice; and in a very bad humour, therefore, he was to set out at daybreak.

The count's ill-humour was by no means soothed by the fact that up to the moment of opening the ball, which she was to do with his assistance, Mademoiselle Anne had cleverly managed to avoid any approach to a *tête-à-tête* with him. All the morning, since his appearance, she had been absent from Cheticamp. Upon her return she had been sleeping. Through dinner, and afterward, she had been dressing. And since her arrival in the drawing-room to receive the guests she had kept obstinately beside her uncle's chair. To her

uncle, who was obliged to receive his guests sitting because his ancient enemy, the gout, was just then assailing him in force, she had made herself so indispensable and so enchanting that the old gentleman grew selfish and quite forgot it was his place to play into De Viron's hands. The latter, indeed, was not allowed to feel himself slighted. Mademoiselle de Biencourt was not heedless of the duties of hospitality. Though sweetly obtuse when the count would seek to manœuvre for a private word with her, though disdainfully uncomprehending when he would strive to establish a claim to intimate understanding, though delicately and bewilderingly derisive when he would endeavour to besiege her ear with discreet tendernesses, she never let him go away with his discontent. Whether that she remembered her duty, and had compunctions, or that she dreaded his enterprise and thought best to keep him in sight, she herself could not have told. Truth was, however, that every little while, from the safe vantage of his Excellency's side, she would send him a glance from deep, inexplicable eyes, and back he would come in haste, thrilled and subdued.

"What is it? What is the matter, my lady?" he had once been so misguided as to ask. But Anne's blank look of incomprehension, so plainly assumed, had effectually discouraged him.

When, at last, it was time for him to claim the small, arrogant figure, and lead her to the head of the dance that was forming, he was in no frame of mind to do himself credit in Mademoiselle's eyes. Under such conditions the most experienced man of the world may throw away all his advantages, and become as imbecile as the greenest boy in the madness of a first passion. The Count de Viron was not fortunate. He was certainly very distinguished-looking, however, as Anne acknowledged to herself; and the sullen fire of wrath in his face made him almost handsome. She had no very positive objection to him, indeed, except as a lover, and particularly as a lover not of her own choosing. She had no desire to be any more disagreeable to him than should prove absolutely necessary.

But De Viron was not politic. When he should have been devoting himself to the intricacies of the figure, he was staring at his

partner, and making mistakes which put out the other dancers. This annoyed Anne, who liked the thing in hand done well. Whatever the game she chanced to play, whether great or little, she was apt to play it with absorption; and just now her game was the dance. When, therefore, De Viron almost stopped her to mutter, half in pleading, half in demand: "When am I to see you for a minute alone, Anne?" she could not keep a note of impatience from her reply.

"I don't know, monsieur, really. As hostess, I have duties."

There was no time for more at the moment, but presently he was again beside her.

"Am I the only one toward whom you have no duty?" he demanded, tactlessly enough.

Mademoiselle's dark face flashed at him with sudden, radiant mockery.

"I should have thought that, toward you, monsieur, you would have it my pleasure, not my duty!"

Upon this he had some moments to ponder before the chance came to reply. It was a speech which left opening for gracious and persuasive replies, moreover; but Monsieur de

Viron, as we have seen, was not in the mood to make right use of his opportunities. He blundered scornfully through his steps, and, as he returned to Mademoiselle's side, followed by vexed glances from the other dancers, he returned also, doggedly, to his first demand.

"But whether as your duty or your pleasure, Anne, I want you to give me a little of your company," he urged. "When shall it be, my Lady Difficult? I am leaving for Port Royal at daybreak."

"So soon!" exclaimed Anne, innocently. "Why, you only arrived this afternoon!"

"I arrived early this morning," corrected De Viron, in an injured voice, diverted for the moment from his point. "And you know well enough that your good uncle has insisted on my rushing off this way. He seems to think it will require all Acadie to upset this handful of psalm-singing Boston pirates!"

"They seem to be very brave. I don't believe you can do anything with them, monsieur," said Anne, purposing to irritate him into further discussion of matters safely impersonal. But this time she touched too heavily, doing injustice to his discernment. For

a moment he stared at her with angry amazement. Was it possible that Anne de Biencourt, daughter of ten generations of French soldiers, could have so poor an opinion of the soldiers of France? Then he understood her tactics, and laughed with unwilling appreciation.

"You've cleverly turned my flank, Anne," said he. "But I am not routed. Tell me, dear, when am I to see you?"

"When you return from thrashing these English — perhaps," laughed Mademoiselle.

This discouraging answer drove De Viron to bluntness. The dance had just ended, and Mademoiselle was turning with decision to resume her place beside her uncle's chair. In the pause, she felt that every eye in the room was fixed upon herself and her partner. She saw that De Viron's face was dark.

"There will be no 'perhaps' then, my dearest lady," he declared, quietly.

"Why not?" demanded Anne, resentful of this tone of confident authority. She felt that her face had gone suddenly aflame, and instead of continuing down the room toward her uncle, she turned toward the nearest wall, where stood

a tallish, round-faced priest, with mirthful, childlike blue eyes and a mouth of mingled subtlety and tenderness.

Feeling himself now on sure ground, while Mademoiselle's weapons were trembling in her grasp, De Viron recovered his composure and grew more considerate. He did not reply till she had reached the shelter of her confessor's side, where she turned with an air of defiant apprehension.

De Viron gave her one ardent look, then dropped his eyes to her small, brown, shapely hands.

"Because," said he, softly, "I have to go back to Quebec next week, — in four days, — and — his Excellency has promised that I am not to go alone!"

Anne's colour faded out like a sinking flame, and she glanced from one side to the other, as if looking for an escape from the cage that was about to close upon her. Instinctively she caught the priest's arm, and was brought back to her self-possession by a glimpse of his clear eyes smiling down upon her with comprehension and sympathy and veiled warning. Back into her own eyes leaped the old mocking

light, and she dropped De Viron a sweeping curtsey.

"Indeed, monsieur, you do me too much honour!" she said.

"It is I who am honoured, my dearest lady," responded De Viron, gravely.

"Pardon me if I seemed, in my surprise, to value too poorly my good fortune," continued Anne, her eyes cast down. "I had not dreamed that I should be asked to assume the fetters so soon!" Her voice sounded strange in her own ears. She had not, in very truth, guessed for an instant that her fate was so imminent. And till that moment she had never fully realized how all her soul and body rebelled against that fate. Her helplessness confronted her unmasked. There was no way out. There was no excuse for questioning her uncle's choice, — and his authority was supreme. Monsieur de Viron was well born, rich, intelligent, good to look upon, quite sufficiently young, — and now she knew, too late, that she hated him. Her heart sickened and sank; but, as it sank, her spirits rose as if to a great emergency. Her colour came back till her lips

were intensest scarlet, and her eyes danced bewilderingly.

This sudden caprice reduced De Viron to instant besottedness.

"Indeed, sweet lady," he murmured, leaning over her, quite forgetful of the priest's guileless eyes fixed upon him, "you shall feel no fetters in my love!"

Mademoiselle's clasp tightened on Father Labillois's arm, and she flashed up at De Viron's face a wicked challenge.

"No fetters, monsieur?" she laughed, softly. "Oh, but courage was always the birthright of the De Virons!"

Somewhat taken aback, the count hesitated for a reply. And while he hesitated, Anne gaily waved her fan at him and slipped off with another partner.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WORD FROM THE BLOCKHOUSE

NEVER had Mademoiselle, since her coming to Cheticamp two years before, been so gracious and so gay as on this night of her betrothal ball. The men who had of old found her distant, to-night found her so sympathetic that they were in danger of losing their heads. More than one, seeing wonders of tenderness in lips which had formerly but mocked them with their scarlet curves, seeing deeps of gentle understanding in dark eyes which had of old but daunted them with their dangerous and laughing light, began to dream mad dreams and look vindictively upon De Viron.

The latter, meanwhile, was not happy. Under one pretext or another, Mademoiselle succeeded in eluding him, save for an occa-

sional swift and passing interchange of phrase, till far into the night. At last, when he was beginning to plan some punishment for this merciless display of coquetry, the governor came tardily to his aid.

Anne was standing by his Excellency's chair, squandering her gayest wit and brightest glances upon Father Labillois, who listened with something of solicitude behind the frank affection of his eyes. As De Viron hastened up, resolute rather than hopeful, she made as if to dart away on some too long neglected duty. But his Excellency laid a hand upon her arm.

"It is time you rested a little, chérie," he said, looking at her radiant face with admiration. "You have been doing the utmost of your duty to-night. But now Monsieur the Count may surely claim a share of your attention."

"I have found him inclined to claim it all. One has to be almost severe with him," laughed Mademoiselle. But at the same time she cast an appealing look at Father Labillois, as if calling upon him to rescue her. De Viron caught the look. The words would have

pleased him well enough, but that imploring glance baffled and chilled him. He eyed the priest with an instant and fierce antagonism, which the latter accepted benignly. His Excellency looked from one to the other with an air of puzzled impatience. It had never occurred to him, nor did it occur to him now, that Anne could have the slightest dissatisfaction with the choice he had made for her. Indeed, if such an idea had occurred to him, it would have troubled him not in the least. But just at this moment his foot gave a twinge, and he felt that the moment was ill chosen for lovers' tiffs.

"I wouldn't be too severe with him now, Anne, or he might take it into his head to be severe with you after next Wednesday," he growled, raising an admonitory finger. Then the twinge loosed its grip, the bristling brushes of his eyebrows drew apart again, and his voice softened. "Run away now and make up while you have a good chance," he commanded.

Seeing no way out of it, Mademoiselle laid her finger-tips in De Viron's ready arm, and was about to let him lead her away in tri-

umph to the library, where she felt that she would have some difficult and dangerous fencing to do. But just at this moment a young officer came up to his Excellency, leaned over his chair, and told him something in a low voice. Anne caught the word "blockhouse," and a spasm of terror took her in the throat. "Wait!" she cried, abruptly, and drew her escort back without ceremony. Then, seeing a look of surprise on his face, she pulled herself together in a second, and laughed up at him in a manner to disarm resentment and make him forget surprise.

"Just one moment, monsieur," she suggested. "This may be some news from the seat of war. My uncle looks interested."

"Oh," said his Excellency, answering her glance of eager question, "it's only that some one has got some one shut up hard and fast in the old blockhouse down on the Vardeau trail."

Anne swallowed a strange dryness in her throat.

"Why, I came past the old blockhouse this very morning!" she remarked, incredulously.

"I shot a partridge just on the edge of the clearing. The door was wide open."

"That was twelve hours ago, — fourteen hours ago, child," answered his Excellency, indulgently. "The whole course of a life may be changed in twelve hours."

"But how do you know there is some one shut up in the blockhouse?" persisted Anne, feeling that she must find out everything, and that without delay.

"Why," interposed the young officer, eager to talk to Mademoiselle, "it appears that Gil Beaudy — one of our *coureurs des bois,* you know — has just come in by the trail. As he passed the blockhouse, he remembered a pipe he had left there last week, and stopped to get it. He found the door securely barred on the outside. Surprised at this unusual circumstance, he undid the bar and tried to enter. To his infinitely greater astonishment, the door was equally secured upon the inside also. Naturally, he cast about for an explanation. Stealing noiselessly around, he listened beneath each of the loopholes. At length he heard the sound of deep, regular breathing. It was just where he knew the bunk was situated. Plainly, a

man was imprisoned in the blockhouse, and asleep in the bunk. Plainly, too, he had reason to fear some violence from without, as he had taken pains to fasten the door on the inside. It was further manifest that he was courageous, or he would never have had the composure of mind to sleep under such conditions!"

The young officer paused triumphant, elated beyond measure at having so marvellously succeeded in holding the rapt attention of Mademoiselle de Biencourt, hitherto almost unconscious of his existence. He paused to let his words have due effect, but he had distinctly the manner of holding something important in reserve. By this time a glittering crowd had gathered about him, hanging on his words.

But Monsieur de Viron was impatient, and altogether incredulous as to the importance of his news.

"All this excitement about some *habitant* rivalry!" said he, scornfully. "No doubt Jean has trapped Jacques, and got him locked up to keep him away from little stub-fingered Josephte. And no doubt Jacques has bolted the door on the inside, lest Jean should come back and cudgel him when Josephte proves un-

responsive. And this is what delays his Excellency's festivities!"

For this clever interpretation of the circumstances, De Viron had his instant reward, for Anne permitted herself to squeeze his arm shyly, in a way that made the blood run trembling through his veins. Every one looked superciliously at the young officer as at one who had appropriated their consideration under false pretences. And his Excellency said: "Well, we'll find out all about it in the morning. Meanwhile, it is certainly nothing to divert such a company as this from its amusement."

But the young officer had his forces in reserve. He was a tactician, with a future ahead of him.

"Your pardon for one moment, your Excellency," he interposed, hastily, with an air of confidence which checked the scattering crowd. "There is an English boat pulled up in the creek not half a mile from the blockhouse. The oars are in it. The name *God's Providence* is on the stern, so it has evidently come from that accursed ship of the Bastonnais which is now harrying our shores. No empty

boat could have drifted all the way around through the islands and up here. Is it not probable that the mysterious prisoner is some one who has got lost from the English ship?" Drawing himself to his full height, the speaker proudly surveyed his audience.

"H'm-m-m!" muttered De Viron, grudgingly; but, before he could attack this hypothesis, the young man continued:

"Whoever he is, he seems to be a gentleman, for he carries a small sword; and he seems to have protested against his capture, for there are two of those thieving rascal fishermen from the island lying dead in the bushes. It must have been a pretty fight." The governor slapped his well leg joyously, and cried:

"Of course, my boy! That explains it all. Some of the good fishermen down there have captured the scoundrel, and caged him, in order that they may bring him to me in the morning and get a reward. And they shall have it, too. But meanwhile, we might get him up here that you may take a look at him before you leave, De Viron. He won't be much to look at when you get back!" And his Excellency laughed with savage satisfaction. The burning of St.

Clement's had combined with the gout to make him merciless.

Anne shivered, and looked at the speaker with eyes of horror. She was about to protest, — to say she knew not what, — when De Viron's voice interfered.

"Perhaps, your Excellency, I had better go and fetch him myself," he said, with angry irony. "I don't seem to be particularly needed here."

Anne had not looked at him for some time. Now, however, she awoke to the instant needs of the situation. She pressed his arm and turned upon him a glance of melting reproach.

"I think you have an engagement with me, have you not, monsieur?" she whispered, leaning up to his shoulder with intimate confidence.

"Do you really want me to stay?" he asked in reply, as foolishly and as fervently as if he had never in all his life before put such a question.

"I don't want you to go, monsieur!" responded Anne, with an altogether convincing note in her voice.

"After all, your Excellency," spoke up the conciliated gentleman, "what is the use of disturbing ourselves to-night? Why not leave Master Pirate to his bad dreams till morning? It is clear from Beaudy's report that he is well secured. For my own part, I can exist without seeing him; and I have no messages to send to the devil by his hand!"

Anne gave him a look of bright approval, and took a step or two as if with the intention of leading him away. Then, with a gesture of deprecation, she turned again to hear what more his Excellency had to say.

"Well, that's all right for you, De Viron, seeing that you have so much more interesting fish to fry!" said the old soldier. "No doubt the rascal is shut up fast enough, and safe where he is for the present. But who come so mysteriously may go just as mysteriously. I'll have Beaudy go back and keep an eye on the place till morning. Then we'll look into it. If my confounded foot will let me get that far, I'll ride down myself. This inaction is most damaging to my temper!" And the governor looked quite cheerful at the prospect of having an Englishman to hang in the morning. "Be

good enough to send Beaudy off at once," he added, turning to the young officer.

Mademoiselle had heard all that it was necessary for her to hear. She realized that whatever was to be done had to be done at once. Yet for a second or two her brain refused to work. Then she turned to De Viron with a little laugh.

"Are you quite sure, monsieur, that you want to come and talk to me in the library, instead of rushing off to bag that unhappy Englishman for his Excellency?"

As she was speaking, however, and moving away, she cast a significant look at Father Labillois. It was both imperative and imploring; and behind it the wise old priest caught a gleam of actual terror. Quick always to understand, and his wits in this case sharpened by his fervent affection for the girl, he presently started after her in a careless fashion. It was he, of course, who had carried Mademoiselle's basket to the blockhouse that afternoon; and not only because it was her whim, but out of his own compassion, he sympathized with her anxiety to shield the prisoner from a brutal death. But he was beginning to be

troubled by the ardour of her solicitude. With his childlike simplicity went much worldly insight and understanding of the human heart, and he began to tremble for the wayward and hitherto unthwarted girl.

Within the library, Mademoiselle paused, and for a fraction of a second laid both hands on De Viron's arm. "Wait for me here just two minutes, monsieur," she commanded, as imperious as ever, but with a difference that made the very imperiousness of her words an intimacy. This difference was not lost on an experienced courtier like De Viron. Nevertheless, with a quick suspicion born of her previous coquetries, his face clouded and he hesitated with his reply.

"Why do you leave me — I mean — I beg your pardon; you will certainly come back to me *at once?*" he demanded, somewhat confusedly.

Anne's face grew grave.

"I will certainly return at once, monsieur, — that is, within five minutes at the most," she answered. "I have to speak to my maid. Then I will come back to you here."

Neither her words nor her look permitted further question, and De Viron was satisfied.

"I will wait here for you, dearest lady," he answered, with a brightening face. "Only remember, please, that each separate minute will seem to me an hour."

Anne sped from the room trippingly, like a child. Just outside the door she ran into Father Labillois. The laughter died from her face, and her fear looked out frankly from her eyes, which had grown wide and black.

"Come with me!" she entreated, and ran down the passage. And the priest followed her obediently.

Just around a turn of the passage, where stairs ran up to Lizette's little room, Anne stopped.

"We must save him at once! They will hang him to-morrow!" she panted.

"What can we do, dear child?" asked the priest.

"There is only one quite safe place, — in the storeroom in the ell, — over my apartments. I keep the key myself. You know the way in, through the garden, and by my door."

The old priest shook his head doubtfully,

not seeing how to carry out so audacious and dangerous a scheme. But Anne took the gesture for one of refusal, and grew excited.

"Oh, you must! Surely you will not desert me!" she cried, clutching his firm, white hands. "Surely *you* are not a savage like these others. Oh, I implore you on my knees. If they catch him, I am for ever dishonoured, because he trusted me, and gave up his sword to me, — and I will be unable to protect him."

"But what am I to do?" asked the priest, who could not at the moment see how to accomplish Anne's purpose.

Anne kissed the hands she was grasping so fiercely.

"Thank you," she murmured, calmed at once by this implied acquiescence. "Just take a cassock and a hat of your own. You are nearly as tall as he. You will know better than any one how to manage, — you who are so clever as well as so kind!"

Father Labillois smiled, both at her flattery, which he knew to be sincere, and at her readiness of resource.

"But Gil Beaudy will be there ahead of

me," he objected, making further demand upon her resourcefulness.

"I will see to that at once," answered Anne. "I will have Lizette, whom he adores, detain him awhile. Oh, go, go!"

"I am gone! Be at ease!" said Father Labillois. He slipped swiftly down the passage and disappeared.

Mademoiselle ran up to Lizette's room, whither she knew that much ennuiéd maiden had betaken herself a little while before to lie down and wait till it should be time for her to undress her mistress. There was really no one at Cheticamp whom she could associate with.

"Come, child," ordered Anne, impetuously, "jump up and run down-stairs and find Gil Beaudy, and keep him for a whole hour without letting him out of your sight!"

Lizette sprang up, obedient but pouting. Gil's wordless devotion bored her unspeakably.

"But what — but why, mademoiselle?" she questioned, hastily putting her hands to her hair and glancing into her glass. She saw that Mademoiselle de Biencourt was in earnest.

"Because I wish it; it is of importance to me, Lizette," said Anne, with emphasis.

But Lizette had the persistence of a proved favourite. Moreover, she had justice on her side, for how could she hope to serve Mademoiselle effectively unless she held some clue to the situation?

"Yes, mademoiselle. Of course. Whatever you wish. But tell me what you want me to do."

"Don't talk, but go, child!" cried Mademoiselle. "Keep Beaudy occupied for an hour, that's all. His Excellency is sending him on an errand which will do me injury. He mustn't go for an hour. You can make him forget even his fear of the governor, — can't you, Lizette? It is for me, child. Go, — there's no time for explanation! Only run, run, run!"

And Lizette, her face one eager question, but elated with her mission, confident in her power, and delighted to aid in thwarting the governor, ran from the room with a laugh that was a studied copy of Anne's own.

"Trust me, mademoiselle!" she cried, as she vanished. Then, with a wonderful light in her face, an expression such as might well

make the most diffident of lovers hard to manage, she ran back to keep her tryst with De Viron in the library. She had been away more than the allotted five minutes, but when De-Viron looked at her he forgot it.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MISSION OF LIZETTE

WHILE Mademoiselle, in the library with Monsieur de Viron, was opening her difficult but undeniably stimulating game of allurements and reserves, Lizette was in the servants' quarters looking for Gil Beaudy. Inquiry developed the fact that Gil had just been sent away by the governor's orders, on some wild-goose chase or other. They said in the kitchen that he would not divulge his errand, but that he cursed very bitterly, and went like a laggard, from which they inferred it was not greatly to his liking. Lizette sped after him, — and overtook him just at the mouth of the lane beyond the garden. He was slouching along sullenly and slowly, so engrossed in his ill-temper that he failed to hear the light feet tripping up behind

him. But when a soft voice, low but merry, murmured, "Why, Gil!" just at his ear, and a small hand plucked his sleeve, he straightened up with an inarticulate sound of delight and astonishment, — a sound that was almost a sob, — and caught the adventurous little hand before it could make good its escape.

"Lizette!" was all he could say. Was it possible she had come out to look for him? He did not dare to let himself think anything so wonderful as that. Nevertheless he kept fast hold of her hand, while he cudgelled his brain for the right thing to say to her.

"You mustn't keep hold of my hand that way, Gil!" said Lizette, presently, feeling that with this particular lover the silent method was likely to prove difficult and dangerous. Then, in the simplicity and strength of the glimmering night, she became dimly conscious, for the first time, of a force akin to nature itself in this large-limbed, awkward-looking man, who, indeed, had only seemed awkward when striving to make love to her. She remembered that when he came in with gun and game, striding vigorously and fronting the

world with the woodsman's clear eye, he had not seemed awkward at all.

Gil wondered why she said he must not hold her hand, if it were really he whom she had wished to speak to. If it were some one else she was looking for, then it was natural she should protest. He realized that she was trying (he did not realize how feebly she was trying) to draw her hand away. He let it fall as if it had burned him.

"It was some one else, then, that you were looking for, Lizette? Forgive me!" And he turned away.

"You stupid!" retorted the girl, touching his arm again ever so lightly, then stepping aside from the road and leaning against the fence, where the scented syringa blossoms made a whiteness against the dark of the garden-trees. As Gil did not instantly follow, she added, "It was you I wanted, Gil!"

He was at her side in an instant, towering over her, reverential, diffident, yet with a certain confidence which she had not found in him before, — as if here in the open and the night he was on his own domain, and felt the right

to protect her. For the moment, he had utterly forgotten his Excellency's commission.

"What was it you wanted of me, Lizette?" he asked, gently. "I know I am too dull and rough for you to want my company. But what service can I do you?"

Lizette, recovering her hand, and putting both of them behind her back, laughed up at him wickedly.

"You certainly are rough, Gil. But I don't know that you are altogether dull. Only a little silly about me, perhaps, so that the others laugh. But really —"

Here the woodsman interrupted her. The idea that the house-servants, whom he despised, had been laughing at his adoration for Lizette, was new to him, and filled him with scornful wrath. Even in that dim light Lizette could see how his face grew stern and masterful. "I will see to it that they stop laughing!" he said, quietly. And it happened, strangely enough, that from a certain ring in his voice Lizette believed him, — believed that he could make good his words. Hitherto she had seen him at a hopeless disadvantage; but now he was himself, with Nature his willing and ap-

proving ally; and the girl was amazed to find how little she was bored by the task which her mistress had thrust upon her. At the same moment she felt, for the first time, a doubt of her own ability to carry out her part. This was not just the kind of man she had started out so confidently to manage. Could she hold him a whole hour from his duty?

She was just about to speak, when her quick ears caught the sound of footsteps hurrying down the road. Gil, of course, had heard them, but was unconcerned. Lizette, however, did not wish to be seen. She came close up, and sheltered herself behind Gil's tall figure, holding on to him with both hands as she might have used the trunk of a tree, and peering cautiously under his arm to see who the hurried wayfarer was.

It was Father Labillois, with a bundle under his arm. He did not seem to observe the shadowy forms by the fence; but from the corner of his eye he saw and noted, and was satisfied.

"Anne is a clever little general!" he muttered to himself. "She knows how to use us all in order to carry her point. But I fear the

child is getting into deep water now, in this business." Then he hurried on the faster, determined that, in any case, it should not be through him that she might fail. As his black form faded up the road, Gil whispered to Lizette, "It is the good father. He goes with comfort to some one sick in the village. He is never too tired, if any one needs him."

"Yes, it is Father Labillois. How he loves Mademoiselle!" murmured the girl. And as she spoke it flashed upon her intuition that the good priest was bound upon no churchly mission, but upon some errand of Mademoiselle's. In his intent haste she seemed to detect her mistress's impetuous hand. Then, it appeared, she and Father Labillois, and this big woodsman against whom she found herself still leaning with no discontent, were all involved in some great mystery, vital to Mademoiselle's happiness. She was now more consumed with curiosity than ever; but being a loyal little soul, she resolved, as Father Labillois had resolved a few seconds earlier, that whatever Mademoiselle's inscrutable purpose might be, it should not fail through her.

Lizette was dying to ask Gil the nature

of the errand upon which his Excellency had hurried him off at such an hour. This, she felt sure, would afford her an adequate clue to the situation. But she restrained herself heroically, lest any display of curiosity at this step should weaken her position. Moreover, she was afraid to remind Gil of his duty, lest he should drag himself off, however reluctantly, to perform it. From several hundred yards away, through the trees of the orchard and the garden, miraculously confused with dewy garden fragrances, came faint, sweet cadences of music from the ballroom. These sounds did not break or jar the still solitude and wonder of the night, but were absorbed by it, and only added a further magic to its vast enchantment. Lizette felt a strange spell creeping over her, which it took all her resolution to withstand. She felt herself growing sick of littlenesses and emptinesses. She had an impulse to be earnest with this strong and simple man, whom she had just discovered. It was hard for her to restrain herself from playing her part too seriously.

"Tell me, Lizette, what it is you want of

me!" persisted Gil, after a few moments of expectant silence.

"Why," asked Lizette, sparring for time, because she felt herself lacking her usual readiness, "are you in a hurry to be gone, Gil?" She heard her own words with dismay, realizing that they forced him to remember his errand; and hastily she continued, "Isn't it good just to be here? I didn't know the nights down here at Cheticamp could be so beautiful. What is that great star over there? I suppose you have to know the stars, to be able to find your way in the woods at night! That seems so wonderful to me, Gil, to be able to find your way by the stars."

When she paused, groping in her brain for something more to say about the stars, Gil spoke.

"It is *so* good to be here, Lizette," he said, with a little thrill in his quiet, slow voice, "that never in all my life before have I been so happy. But I have to go, because I am on his Excellency's business. I want to know before I go what it is I can do for you, Lizette. That will give me something to think of while I'm gone."

"There *was* something I wanted you to do

for me!" answered Lizette, with unfeigned earnestness in her voice. "And there was something I had to tell you, too! But we won't bother about it if you have to rush right off that way, just when I want you. I never did want you before, Gil, you know that well enough. And if you're going to rush away now, I'll never want you again!"

In her anxiety, in her sudden apprehension of something too strong and unyielding for her petty resources, she caught his arm with both hands.

At that light but eager clasp, at the childlike appeal in her voice, the woodsman's face burned, and the blood sang in his ears. For nearly a year he had been hopelessly in love with this merry, dainty girl, so different from all the other women he knew. She had seemed to scorn him. She had held herself so loftily aloof that he had never dared to hope even for a little kindness. Yet here she was, suddenly, wanting his help, wanting his presence, apparently even liking him. It seemed to him like an intoxicating dream. He shivered with the longing to catch her to his heart, to pour out wild words of devotion, to vow heroic

deeds that might make him less unworthy of her. And instead of this, all he could say to her was that he must leave her the first time she needed him, — and risk losing her for ever! As these thoughts tumbled confusedly through his brain, his ecstasy died away into a dull despair. He had undertaken his Excellency's errand. He was on duty, — on his honour, in a certain sense; and he was unable to imagine himself failing in that duty for any personal happiness or advantage. It was not fear of the consequences that moved him, but the sense that a trust had been committed to him. His large hands — sinewy, but not thick and calloused like those of the field-worker — caught both of Lizette's, and held them helpless.

"I knew it could not last, Lizette!" he managed to say presently. "I knew it was only a dream. But I must go, for the governor has ordered it. When there is an enemy in the land, a man just obeys orders, without letting himself think of life or of love, Lizette. He just has to. But I'll be back in a few hours, — why, before you open your beautiful eyes from

sleep, sweet one. But tell me, tell me now before I go!"

Lizette snatched her hands petulantly from his grasp, and turned away. As he did not follow her, however, but remained standing where he was, she did not go far.

"At least you owe it to me to tell me what it is, this so important business of the governor's, that will not let you stay one little half-hour with me!" she demanded.

"Surely," answered Gil, "there is no reason I may not tell you, though I would not tell those chatterers in the kitchen. There is an English prisoner shut up in the old blockhouse down the Vardeau trail, — I've no notion who it is, — and the governor has sent me to keep watch that no one lets him out before morning. I am on guard, you see! So I *must* go!"

This, to Lizette, threw no new light upon the situation in which they were involved. She could not in any way connect the prisoner with Mademoiselle de Biencourt.

"You are afraid of the governor!" she retorted, with a disdainful toss of her head.

Gil laughed, quietly, a little bitterly.

"Why should I be so afraid of his Excellency?" he asked. "He could, of course, hang me for disobedience, — if he caught me! But the world is a wide place, for us woodsmen! And his Excellency's arm is not so very long! No, it's not that! Oh, Lizette, can't you understand? Now, tell me. For I *must* go!"

"I understand well enough, that you care more for that ugly old man's orders than you do for me!" said Lizette, hanging her head. She felt that she was making poor play, that her resources were fast failing, and that in another minute the tall woodsman would be gone.

Her clumsy device was effective enough, however, for Gil's guileless heart. He was at her side again in an instant. His hands just touched her arms, then drew away again reverently.

"I love you, Lizette, more than life. There is nothing in the world, I think, but you. And you are so beautiful, so dainty fine, like a young doe of the first year. And you are sweeter than the first blossoms of the arbutus under the leaves."

Lizette could have listened indefinitely to

this sort of thing. She had had compliments before, but never any that quite so well suited her taste. When he stopped, she could not very well urge him to go on in the same strain; so, after a discreet pause, to make sure she was not interrupting, she retorted:

"And yet, you are going to leave me, — now!"

The words began in a tone of reproach, but ended with an indescribable allurement, which made Gil's head swim and his breath come quickly.

"Oh, — I have to!" he muttered, unsteadily. "Cant you see — " And he was blundering on manlike into further unconvincing attempt at explanation, when Lizette interrupted.

"And I," she said quietly, playing her trump-card in desperation, "am going away, going away from Acadie!"

Gil's vast, stable, well-balanced world seemed to reel about him.

"Going away — from Acadie?" he echoed, dully.

"I am expecting to return to Quebec within a week!" she continued, not untruthfully.

She felt certain that De Viron would carry Mademoiselle off right after the marriage.

Gil stood stunned. His new and wild hopes — hopes which had not, indeed, been admitted into his brain, but had thronged irresistibly into his heart under the spell of Lizette's strange interest — were suddenly drowned in blackness. This, perhaps, was his one chance to win a hold upon her. Could he let it go? He felt himself wavering. His orders began to look utterly insignificant. But no, he must fulfil his duty, and trust to the morrow for his own affairs. With a groan that was much like a sob he turned away, and strode resolutely up the road toward the Vardeau trail.

CHAPTER X.

SPELLS AND COUNTER SPELLS

LIZETTE stood motionless, expecting him to relent, or at least look back. But Gil dared not trust himself to turn his head. The girl waited till his tall figure was just vanishing in the shadows, then gathered her skirts in one hand and sped noiselessly after him, keeping him just in sight. Absorbed in his emotions, which were a hopeless tangle of ecstasy, pain, astonishment, and intoxication, the woodsman was less alert than usual, and did not hear the light feet following him.

When she started after this unmanageable lover, Lizette had no clear plan of action. But as she followed, taking care not to overtake him and praying now that he might *not* look back, a scheme began to take shape. As it

developed in her little head she was delighted with it, and felt sure of its success. Her anxiety on this point thus allayed, and her dread of failing her mistress reassured, she had time to wonder at the caprice of her own heart. Here she was following that shadowy figure with an eagerness too keen to be altogether the result of zeal in her mistress's service. She had been conscious of a little thrill when Gil's strong hands had held her. She was conscious of wanting him to touch her again, to hold her fast. She felt that she must have him at her feet, — and she refused to look any farther. But to her amazement she found herself glorying in the fact that he had proved too strong for her to manage. He was her first failure, — and she found herself actually proud of having failed.

"The night, and all this mystery that's afoot, have surely got into my brain," she thought to herself, as she flitted along the grassy edge of the road, her light slippers soaked with the dew.

For perhaps a quarter of a mile the lonely road ran through fields, and was fringed at intervals with erect and steeplelike Lombardy

poplars. Then it ran into a partly cleared region, with patches of wood, and thickets, and open glades. The patches of wood were very black, and, as she traversed them, her heart thumping with excitement and apprehension, she hurried so as to catch up a little on that strong, reassuring figure which strode ahead. She was now looking anxiously for a spot just suited to her purpose. There was danger, every moment, that Gil might look back and discover her too soon.

At length the road led close along the edge of a steep gully, its sides dotted with dense, cushiony clumps of young spruce and juniper. This was just the sort of spot she wanted, a spot where one might seem to have fallen without consequences too overwhelmingly serious. She let herself down to the first juniper thicket, then gave a piercing shriek, and fell into the bushes with a crash. It was well managed; but the juniper had more hard, uncompromising stems than she had imagined, and she hurt herself much more than she had intended. Moreover, the juniper prickles scratched her smartly, which frightened her; so that as she

lay there moaning and sobbing her distress was not wholly dramatic.

Gil had jumped at that scream, as if a knife had gone through him. His heart knew instantly that the voice was Lizette's, and his blood ran cold. His amazement that she should be out there in the woods was swallowed up in terror. It seemed to Lizette that not five seconds had elapsed since her fall, and here he was already bending over her, imploring her to speak. He started to lift her out of the bush, but this she thought best not to allow for the present.

"No, not yet!" she protested, brokenly. "I don't think I'm much hurt, — but wait a minute, Gil. Oh, how did I come to be so careless? My foot slipped — on the edge!"

"Where — where does it hurt you, sweet?" stammered Gil, in desperate fear. He had possessed himself of both her hands, and she returned his pressure gently.

"I knew you would come," she murmured.

But the woodsman could not leave her in what seemed to him such an uncomfortable position.

"I must lift you, Lizette," he whispered. "Stop me if it hurts too much."

Feeling like a tiny child in his arms as he raised her, she stopped sobbing and with difficulty checked a sigh of content. He carried her up the slope, across the road, and over to a mossy hillock beside the fence. There he paused, holding her on his broad breast as one carries a baby, and uncertain just what ought to be done.

"I think I am all right, really," said Lizette, feeling at last that the game was well in hand. "Most likely I was just frightened to death at falling that way into the dark. Oh, that was terrible! I thought I was going to fall for ever, Gil." And her hands, which were resting on his great shoulders, clutched him shiveringly. For reply he held her a little tighter, still at a loss. So she continued:

"I think you had better put me down, now, please, and let me see if I can stand alone."

Reluctantly, and very gently, Gil set her on her feet. Glad enough he was that he had been so slow about it; for the moment she touched the ground she cried out sharply, and

would have fallen in a heap had he not frantically gathered her up again.

"Oh, it hurts!" she sobbed, her lips very close to his ear.

"What is it, sweet?" he asked, bending his rugged face over hers, and speaking with a croon, as a mother speaks over a sick child. "Is it your foot?"

Her willingness to try to stand and her ease when he carried her had given immeasurable relief to his fears, assuring him that she had suffered no serious internal hurt. A sprain or a broken bone he knew how to treat, with crude but effective backwoods surgery.

"I think it's only that I've sprained my ankle," replied Lizette. "That's nothing at all to what it might have been, is it? But it hurts, *terribly*. I suppose you think me a perfect baby, Gil. But, really, if I were not pretty brave I'd be crying hard right now. Why, at home I'd be crying with half the pain I'm suffering now. But you're so strong and brave, Gil, I'm ashamed to be a baby before you."

Tears of sympathy came into Gil's eyes. "I know well enough how it hurts, sweet.

You are very brave to stand it so," said he, with such depth of understanding and tenderness in his voice that Lizette felt a flush of shame burn over her.

"But I'm not going to let you suffer so," he continued, seating her gently on the hillock with her back against the fence.

Before Lizette could protest, — which she was afraid to do too vehemently, — he had her drenched little shoe off, and her wet, dusty stocking, and was rubbing skilfully and firmly at the supposed-to-be-injured ankle. This Lizette had not counted upon, but, being fairly caught, she played the part through cleverly, wincing now and then, and moaning a little, and winning golden opinions from Gil for her pluck in enduring so stoically a treatment which he knew was very painful. For fully fifteen minutes he kneaded and rubbed the instep, and the ankle-joint, and the cords behind the ankle, till Lizette could not help wondering if she would have any foot left. Then, before she could stop him, he bent over and kissed the instep.

"It was dreadful to have to hurt you so," he muttered, hastily, with a little catch in his

breath; "but if I hadn't you would be having a terrible time with it to-morrow, and perhaps for weeks. Now it won't swell up much at all, or trouble you for more than a day or two."

"I'm sure it won't," asserted Lizette, hypocritically, "unless," she added, with downcast eyes, "because of the very strange way you have treated it."

Confused at this sally, for which he had no reply, Gil laid her foot gently down on the grass, and got up.

"Now don't *stir,*" he commanded. "I'm going to get something to put on it that will keep down the fever."

"But it's better already," objected Lizette. Gil laughed incredulously, and moved off.

"Don't go away," she protested, in genuine alarm. "If you go away I'll get up and run after you, no matter what it does to the old foot."

"I'm *not* going away, sweet," responded Gil, positively. "I'm not going twenty steps away. Now keep quite still."

He was groping about the roots of some bushes a few yards up the road. In two or

three minutes he returned with some large leaves drenched with dew. Then he scooped some cool, moist earth from under the moss, and with the aid of the large leaves wrapped the ankle in a generous earth poultice.

"Do you think that is absolutely necessary?" asked the patient, eyeing the poultice with disfavour.

"Absolutely!" answered Gil, in a tone that left no room for argument.

When the leaves were all applied and bound on to his satisfaction, Gil stuffed the wet stocking and slipper into the front of his homespun shirt. Then he arose, picked Lizette once more up in his arms like a baby, and strode off in the direction of Cheticamp. Lizette closed her eyes with mingled triumph and content. How had she ever been so blind to the attraction of such a man as this?

Suddenly she put her lips close to Gil's ear.

"What about his Excellency, Gil?" she whispered, audacious now that she was safe.

The tall woodsman set his teeth doggedly. As he saw his duty, it was first of all to Lizette, in her real hour of need.

"His Excellency's errand will have to wait

till I get you safe home with your poor foot," said he.

Lizette was holding her foot stuck straight out, as befitted a member so seriously injured. She craned up her head and gazed at it. How utterly ridiculous it looked, bundled up in green leaves till the ankle was as thick as a post. As she stared at it she began to laugh hysterically.

"Lizette — what is the matter?" pleaded Gil, surprised and puzzled by this untimely outbreak, which seemed to shock the solemn stillness of the night.

"Oh, Gil, it looks so funny! And, oh, Gil, *you're* so funny!" She flung both arms tight around his sturdy neck, and her laughter broke into sobs against his cheek. The night had been a terrific strain; and at the cost of strange enlightenment had she conquered; and she felt that an honest little cry was now no more than her fair privilege. As for Gil, though her laugh and her tears were equally incomprehensible, her mouth against his cheek was something he could very well understand. He spoke not a word, but crushed her to his great chest and strode on,

while his heart sang within him; and the hopes which had come so timorously into his breast now trooped boldly into his brain and took possession.

Lizette had nothing more to say, so there was silence, and the binding spell of such a silence, till the lighted windows of the seigniory came into view. Then the girl whispered:

"Take me in through the little back garden, to the door of Mademoiselle's room, Gil, dear."

As they went up the narrow, dewy, scented walks and reached the door, and the man was about to set his burden down, Lizette took his rugged face in both hands and turned it fairly to her own, — and then he kissed her on the lips.

She told him to seat her on the door-step, and go at once before any one came to answer her knock.

"And when —" began the man, lingering as if his feet would not endure to take him away.

"At sundown, here, I will thank you for all your goodness, Gil. Go away, now, please."

But, even as he turned, Anne herself opened

the door and looked out anxiously. Recognizing Gil's figure, her face brightened, as she saw that Lizette had succeeded in her part. Then she stared down in wonder at the girl's bare foot and marvellously bandaged ankle.

"Will mademoiselle be so kind as to help me in?" spoke up Lizette, in a voice that Gil must hear. "I have sprained my ankle."

"My poor Lizette," began Mademoiselle, in a voice of deep concern, slipping an arm about her waist and holding her up carefully. But the moment the door was closed Lizette broke away, went hopping on her bandaged foot into Anne's room, and flung herself down on the rug by the bed. She gazed up at her mistress with a strange light in her eyes, such as Anne had never seen there before.

"What in the world is the matter, child?" asked Anne, eager to hear everything, because everything bore on what was nearest her heart. "You had hard work managing Gil? But you succeeded, that's clear. I shall never forget it, Lizette!"

"Nor shall I, mademoiselle," answered the girl, her lips astonishingly red as she sat there on the rug and patted that wonderful leaf-

bandage on her foot. "Oh, yes, I did manage Gil at last! But I think he managed me the most, mademoiselle. He is so — different from what I thought him." And, jumping up, she ran and caught her mistress's hands, and fell to kissing them rather wildly.

Anne looked at her for a moment in some bewilderment. Then a sudden light, born of her own emotions, flashed in upon her, and a sudden thrill of sympathy led her to put her arm around the girl's waist and kiss her. In that moment mistress and maid were just two ardent women together, face to face with tremendous impulses which neither fully understood. But before anything could be said between them Father Labillois's knock was heard at the outer door, and, with her heart in her throat, Anne ran to answer it.

CHAPTER XI.

FATHER LABILLOIS PLAYS HIS PART

ONCE out of sight and hearing of the seigniory, and of the whispering couple beside the fence, Father Labillois had girded up his cassock and broken into a run. Strong and agile, he had kept up this pace almost all the way to the blockhouse, except in places where the Vardeau trail was too rough for running in the dark. Arrived at the clearing, he found the blockhouse door securely fastened on the outside as he had left it in the afternoon. Taking down the bar, he tried the door. It was fastened on the inside also. Hearing no stir within, he went around to the loophole which he guessed to be nearest the bunk, and there listened attentively. The sound of deep, regular breathing came to his ear.

"He sleeps the sleep of good faith and a clear conscience, this Englishman," said the priest to himself. Then he went back and knocked lightly.

Lieutenant Zachary Cowles was awake and out of his bunk in an instant, — but noiselessly as a cat. He made no reply to the summons. It was for the visitor, not for him, to show his hand.

Father Labillois knocked again, and still no answer.

"Lieutenant Cowles," he called softly, beside the nearest loophole, "please open the door at once. There is no time to lose, for the governor has found out there is a prisoner here and is looking forward to the pleasure of stringing you up to a tree the first thing in the morning. We must find a safer hiding-place for you before the soldiers come!"

"You are very kind to consider my feelings in this matter," answered Zachary. "But please tell me, first, who are *we?*"

"I am Père Labillois, Mademoiselle de Biencourt's confessor," answered the priest, quickly, growing a little impatient over the New Englander's wise wariness. "Mademoiselle de

Biencourt has sent me to save you, if possible, conceiving that it lies upon her honour to protect you, since to her you gave up your sword. But his Excellency will certainly hang you if he gets hold of you, — hang you for a pirate, because peace was declared between France and England more than a month ago, and, technically, you and your ship's company *are* pirates."

Zachary gave a low whistle, drawing in his breath, and felt his way across to the door.

"That would be inconvenient," he remarked, coolly. "It seems to me that Mademoiselle, whom I am bound to obey, told me expressly that I was not to open the door for any one but herself. But I trust your voice, monsieur, and open the door. If I am wrong, Mademoiselle's displeasure be upon your devoted head. I think she is a very dangerous young person to trifle with. Gad, I can see those eyes of hers shining right here in the dark!"

As he finished speaking, his bars came down, the door swung inward, and he stepped out into the comparative light of the open. His head bent forward and his brows knit, he scru-

tinized the priest's face composedly and searchingly. It was a face which no one with any knowledge of humanity could fail to trust; and Zachary's expression of reserve broke into a frank, boyish smile. He stretched out his hand, exclaiming:

"Mademoiselle de Biencourt does herself honour in her choice of messengers, monsieur."

But Father Labillois, though he, too, had been scrutinizing his *vis-à-vis,* and had found the result not unsatisfactory, refrained from meeting Zachary's boyish advance. With a kindly smile, which robbed the action of its sting, he put his right hand behind his back.

"You forget, my son," said he, "that you are an avowed enemy to my people, — and with appearances, moreover, much against you, on the charge of common piracy. It is for Mademoiselle de Biencourt, not for you, that I am taking so much trouble."

Zachary flushed deeply, and some new ideas ran through his brain.

"Pardon me, monsieur," he begged, throwing off his confident and debonair manner as he realized, with sudden shame, how inappropriate it was to the situation. "It was dis-

tinctly presumptuous of me to expect you to shake hands with me. I confess I have been taking matters much too lightly, as we soldiers are unfortunately apt to do."

The priest smiled upon him still more kindly for this speech, and handed him the spare cassock and hat which he had brought.

"Put these on, my son," said he, gently, "and then, with your excellent French, we can meet any chance wayfarer without exciting suspicion."

But Zachary eyed the disguise with open disapproval.

"It seems to me, monsieur, that with my excellent French, and in this garb, I stand a good chance of being taken for a spy."

"It is necessary — and it is Mademoiselle's orders!" rejoined Father Labillois. "Moreover, I will guarantee you personally against any such misjudgment. I can't guarantee you personally against being hung for a pirate, but I can against being hung for a spy."

"It is sufficient," laughed Zachary, proceeding to struggle with the cassock, while Father Labillois closed and barred the blockhouse door again. A few minutes later they

had crossed the dim clearing, leaving the squat black bulk of the blockhouse behind them, and had plunged into the aromatic darkness of the trail.

For some time Lieutenant Zachary, clumsily clutching at the long skirt of his cassock and feeling as if his legs were tied together, was hard put to it to keep up with this nimble and sure-footed guide. He was burning with questions, but would not speak lest he should betray that he was out of breath. So he occupied himself in picking his way, avoiding mud-holes, and noting, as fully as he could, by the keen night smells and the tree-tops outlined against the sky, the character of the woods he was passing through. When, at last, the trail came out upon the highway, the first faint grayness foretelling dawn was just beginning to lighten the east.

"We must hurry," urged Father Labillois, glancing back.

Zachary grinned assent, and ranged up alongside, but did not trust himself to speak for a few moments. Then, finding it no trouble whatever to hold his own on the smooth road,

and having learned how to hold up his skirt so it no longer hampered him, he said, heartily:

"You have lungs and legs like a deer, and eyes like a cat, monsieur."

"Not bad for sixty," assented Father Labillois, pleased at the tribute.

Zachary was about to take advantage of his amiability to ask some questions, but just then there came a confused sound of hoof-beats along the road. In an instant he was seized by the arm and dragged into a dense hemlock thicket.

He did not need that iron pressure on his arm to convince him of the advisability of silence, but it convinced him that the priest was every inch a man. A moment later three horsemen went galloping by. When they were gone, Zachary laughed quietly.

"Did you think this disguise might prove inadequate, after all?" he asked.

"I am taking no risks till I deliver you safe and sound into the hands of Mademoiselle de Biencourt," answered his guide. "Those were guests from his Excellency's ball, hurrying home early to get ready to start for Port

Royal, where they hope to have a hand in the capture of your comrades-in-arms."

"Don't they wish they may catch them?" laughed Zachary.

"It will be short shrift for any who may be caught, my son," said Father Labillois. "The governor is in a fury over this raid, — you probably don't know that your good friends have burned St. Clement's, and robbed the church there, almost under the guns of Port Royal. Technically, this is piracy, so long after peace had been declared. And the governor will avail himself of the technicality, if he can, to even up some old scores."

Zachary had no idea what sort of a place St. Clement's was, and he feared it might sound hypocritical if he were to express a polite regret. So he discreetly changed the subject.

"I seem to have got myself into a tight place," he murmured, rather cheerfully. "But, 'pon my honour, monsieur, when I think what small brown hands hold the noose into which I have slipped my head, I can't manage to be as depressed as the case requires. Please try to forgive my high spirits, and tell where I am going."

"Well," answered Father Labillois, "I am taking you straight into the lion's jaws, which is perhaps the one and only place where your presence will not be looked for."

"That's interesting — but not illuminating," said Zachary.

"We are going straight to the governor's house at Cheticamp. There is a ball there to-night."

"Nothing I like better than a ball," asserted Zachary, cordially.

"You are not invited, my son," retorted Father Labillois. "And pardon me if I suggest that your attire is not such as would grace the occasion."

"I'll wear a mask, and call myself a shipwrecked English officer," suggested Zachary.

"The only drawback to that," said the priest, falling into his humour, "is that his Excellency would be so enthusiastic over the disguise that he would insist on your retaining it for his amusement to-morrow."

By this time, making utmost haste, they came in sight of the lights of Cheticamp Manor-house. A moment later a tall figure

went loping by them, doffing his cap to the two priests as he passed.

"That is a guard sent down by his Excellency to keep watch on the blockhouse and make sure you do not escape," whispered Father Labillois, with a little chuckle of triumph.

"He's rather late, is he not?" inquired Zachary, with gentle interest.

"The governor sent him two hours ago. But Mademoiselle saw to that," answered the priest.

"God bless her!" muttered Zachary. An unwonted wave of humility rushed over him. "What have I done to deserve such care and thought from her?"

"No man could *deserve* such favour from Anne de Biencourt," exclaimed the priest, with a quiet passion of enthusiasm, which told Zachary more about the girl than he had reached through his own perception. He made no reply, however; and by this time, avoiding the main approach, they were come to the little back gate of the garden.

"Now, silence," whispered Father Labillois. "The noose hangs very near your neck." And

Zachary, treading like a cat, followed him close through the ranks of wet, white-bloomed syringas to the shaded door in the corner by Anne's window.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRISONER OF MADEMOISELLE

THE door opened impetuously, — and Zachary stood face to face with Mademoiselle de Biencourt. He remembered later that it was his own eyes, not those of Father Labillois, which the girl's eyes sought first. At this moment he noticed above all the difference in her face. As he recalled her appearance, she had been alternately gay and severe, but always imperious, half-scornful, almost arrogantly sure of herself, her small, dark face radiant with light and colour. Now, though in rich and splendid dress, with the sheen of jewels on her bare, exquisite throat and round, slim arms, she seemed nevertheless in every way tenderer and more human. Her face was pale. Her great eyes were dark with solicitude and apprehension. Her lips were

somewhat less dazzlingly scarlet. Her voice, before so mocking, was low and anxious. As he noted the change, Zachary's heart burned toward her, and he felt a sort of adoration stirring within him. The rush and strangeness of events had created an electric atmosphere, in which emotions sprang to ripeness rapidly. He had had a gallant speech all ready for this meeting, — but now he simply gazed, without opening his lips. In the light of the two candles on the wall just inside the door Anne's eyes met the full ardour of his look, and a flush came slowly over her pallor. She dropped her long lashes, and turned to Father Labillois.

"God bless you, father. What loyal and true friends I have!" she whispered, fervently, grasping his hand. Her fervour, indeed, was so frank that the sagacious priest began to fear she had perhaps more than a point of honour at stake in his success.

But Anne gave him no time to speak.

"My guests are just leaving, and I must go instantly," she continued, thrusting a key into his hand. "Will you continue your kindness by taking Monsieur Cowles to his room, — and

locking him in safely, and bringing back the key to me?"

Here a ghost of the old laughter came back to her lips.

"Monsieur will pardon the poor accommodation, for the present. We were hardly prepared for distinguished prisoners!" she added, curtseying to both men with make-believe ceremony ere she slipped away down the passage. Both men stared after her till the last flutter of her skirts disappeared. Then Father Labillois turned with a troubled sigh, laid his finger on his lips, and led the way up a narrow and crooked flight of stairs.

The room into which Zachary was conducted was a spacious, low loft under the eaves. The grayness of dawn coming in through a window at the eastern end showed that the room was littered with boxes of every size and shape. A pile of rugs on one of these boxes showed that the prisoner's comfort had not been quite overlooked.

"I will bid you adieu for the present, monsieur," said the priest, his hand on the door. "I will come back later in the morning; and I have no doubt that the prisoner of Made-

moiselle de Biencourt will find all his needs well cared for."

"It is enough to be her prisoner," said Zachary, impulsively. "I don't think I have any other needs."

Father Labillois was just closing the door, but at these words he opened it again, looked at the young officer with troubled eyes, and seemed about to make some pertinent reply. He changed his mind, however, and merely said:

"Perhaps you had better give me back my hat and cassock, monsieur. They will be at your service again, if necessary. But, in the meantime, in case of accident, they might possibly prove compromising."

"Thank you a thousand times," said Zachary, handing them over, "and thank you more than words can say for all you have done for me. I realize perfectly now that I owe my life to you."

"Don't thank me, my son. It is Mademoiselle de Biencourt only to whom your gratitude is due," answered the priest, once more pausing in the doorway. "And," he added, meaningly, but with some hesitation, "do not

forget that it is for the point of honour that she takes such pains. The point of honour, my son." And he noiselessly closed the door before Zachary could carry the conversation farther. Zachary heard the key turn in the lock, then flung himself down on the heap of rugs, rubbed his eyes, and tried to collect his thoughts.

The sound of the key turning in the lock, and shutting him securely into the house of his enemy, where the most ignominious of deaths was lying in wait for him, gave him no emotion of fear or even of depression. On the contrary, he had been conscious of a strange thrill of elation at the ominous sound. The only thing that seemed of vital consequence to him was that the key was going into the hands of that girl who had looked into his soul with such wonderful, troubled, tender, and unfathomable eyes as he had never before seen even in dream. At the blockhouse this wilful and most mutable of maids had dazzled him, charmed him, amused him. His admiration she had conquered unreservedly. But this proud girl rushing anxiously from the glitter of the ballroom to let him in by the little,

hidden door, — this disdainful girl pale from care about his peril, — this was different. He could think of nothing else than that thrilling look in her eyes. It seemed to him as if that look had given him some portion of herself, as if on the instant, and with uncalculating trust, she had admitted him to the presence of her real self. At the same time, somewhere in that look, as it dwelt before him, he seemed to discern an appeal of some sort, almost a cry for help. This haunted and harassed him, till he craved passionately to answer it. No price in the world, he felt, would be too great to pay for the privilege of responding to that appeal, of rendering that help. But he could conceive of no possible way in which she might need him. How could she, with all her world at her feet, be needing anything which an unknown and helpless prisoner could give her? If only she were in his own country — but at this he laughed shortly, impatient with such vain visions, and got up to stretch his long legs. Then he stole cautiously to the window to look out at the oncoming of the dawn.

The window overlooked a portion of the stable-yard; and he started back hastily, for

there he saw a little company of gentlemen, mounting their horses. Standing back at a safe distance, where the growing light did not strike him, he watched them with keen interest, and decided that they were setting out for Port Royal to organize more efficient defence against the raidings of the *God's Providence*. Of the leader of the party he took particular note, regarding with a soldier's approval his air of competent authority, his firm seat, and his smart uniform, which he recognized as belonging to one of the crack regiments of France. As they started off, they all turned toward the house and saluted some one whom Zachary judged to be standing immediately below his window. But a few paces farther on, just as they wheeled into the roadway, the leader turned half around in his saddle, doffed his cap again, and waved a longer and more devout farewell. A pang of fierce jealousy shot through Zachary's heart, as he realized that the object of such farewell could be no other than Mademoiselle de Biencourt herself. The troop disappeared. The pounding of the horses' hoofs died away. And Zachary stood immovable, with his eyes fixed upon the tides

of airy pink and saffron now flooding up the sky. Dyes of thin pink made wonderful the roofs, and added to the wonder of the shimmering orchards, the spreading fields of young barley. As the light grew, the colours of blossoms began to come out clear in a shadowy corner of the garden down to the right. But little of all this beauty reached Zachary's perception, for he was thinking of a look in Mademoiselle's eyes.

In such a reverie Zachary stood for a time motionless. Then, reminding himself that a soldier ought to sleep whenever there was nothing better to do, the better to go without on fitting occasion, he spread the rugs on the floor and resolutely settled himself for another nap. At first, sleep was far from his eyes; but soon his thoughts of his jailor's eyes became confused, and he imagined he had her with him in the boat, drifting through an impenetrable but miraculously sunlit fog. Presently the roar of breakers sounded all about them, on every side and close ahead, and he sprang and flung his left arm about her waist, feeling sure that he could save her. Then he

woke up, with the loft full of level sunlight, and a sound of heavy wheels in his ears.

He crept to the window, and peered out with the utmost caution. In a heavy, lumbering, open coach, drawn by three horses, two abreast and one ahead, sat a stately, white-moustached, savage-looking old officer, with his foot on a cushion on the seat in front of him. He was in undress uniform, and Zachary recognized him as unmistakably the governor. Half a dozen soldiers and several grooms hurried about, and beside the carriage fretted a superb black horse, saddled and bridled, and held by an orderly.

"His Excellency is going to fetch me from the blockhouse," said Zachary to himself. "If that fine mount is intended for me to ride back on, I take it as mighty civil of the old chap."

In this whimsical assumption Master Zachary was very far astray, for his Excellency was not in the mood to waste time on courtesies to his intended victim. Sleepless from the combined strains of inactivity and pain, he had determined to go himself to fetch the prisoner from the blockhouse. The pretence of a trial, and then the well-deserved

punishment, would wile away the whole morning, at least, and then perhaps he might be able to get some sleep. He had tried the saddle first, but promptly realized that he could not stand the torment of letting his foot hang down for so long a ride. He had ordered out his great carriage, therefore; but, knowing that the last mile of the way would be impassable for wheels, he was having his saddle-horse led alongside, to be mounted at the branching of the trail.

Just as the expedition was about to start, it seemed that the cushion under his Excellency's foot required some readjusting. He pointed to it, with a gesture as if his forefinger were a rod of chastisement. Two soldiers jumped forward to do his bidding, but, in some way, as was evident to Zachary, they did it wrong, or they hurt him. He roared at them, one brief word which the watcher in the window could not catch, and the two soldiers jumped back terrified.

"Verily," thought Zachary, "he hath a right angry eye, his Excellency. He's just spoiling to hang somebody this morning. I'm glad it won't be me."

At this moment Zachary's heart leaped within him, for a slight little figure all in white ran forward to the side of the carriage.

As Mademoiselle's hands arranged the cushion under the aching foot, it was evident to the watcher that her touch had magic in it, for his Excellency's ferocious scowl relaxed into a smile. His heavy hand patted the dark head that was bending over him so tenderly. When the cushion was just right, Anne looked up, kissed her finger-tips to him laughingly, and slipped back. He swept his hat to her grandly as the deliberate procession moved away.

"She is too clever for them all," thought Zachary, with swelling pride, and heedlessly, for a moment, pressed his face to the window, trying to see more of her. He recovered his wits instantly, however, and sprang back, confident that no one had observed him; and in a moment more the yard was empty of all life, save for three black hens, who were diligently dusting themselves in a bright corner.

Zachary returned to his rugs and stood looking down at them. Could he, by any amount of wise resolution, compel himself to

any more sleep? No, he could not. There was a certain excitement in knowing that there was a man-hunt going on, and himself the object of it. But even this soon lost interest, and he found himself studying the elusiveness of Mademoiselle's smile.

From this engrossing study he was aroused by a light tap on the door.

CHAPTER XIII.

MADEMOISELLE AND HER PRISONER

IT was an incredible folly for an old soldier to be guilty of, but Zachary trusted the leap of his pulse which answered to that summons. He sprang to the door, and tried to open it, without waiting for any sign to justify such confidence. He knew well enough that it was Mademoiselle who stood on the other side. The next moment the key turned in the lock, the door opened, and Anne slipped in, closing the door behind her.

She was dressed now in a white gown of some soft, silky material, which clung to her slender figure, and she looked scarcely more than a child. Zachary eagerly held out his hands, but she put both of hers behind her back, and looked at him severely.

"How could you be so mad as to answer

my knock that way?" she demanded. "You must be crazy. It might have been some one else. You knew I had the key!"

"I knew it was you!" he answered, doggedly. "And I forgot you had the key! I forgot everything, except that it was you!"

The excuse seemed to Anne adequate, though she would not acknowledge the fact. But as she observed the way Zachary gazed at her, with a light in his eyes that was very different from the cheerful and boyish admiration he had manifested at their first meeting, she began to recover some of the poise which the strain of the night had broken down. Her face took a warmer colour, her mouth a richer scarlet; and the old imperious gaiety flashed back into her eyes.

"I had no idea, monsieur, when I accepted your surrender and your sword, that one simple prisoner could be such a care to me. If I had had any conception of the responsibility, I should have given you back your freedom without delay."

"You could not give me back my freedom now, mademoiselle," said Zachary. "I can never be free again."

A shade more colour in Anne's gaze suggested that she did not wholly miss Zachary's meaning; but she chose to misunderstand.

"No, I suppose not," she answered, simply. "Having got you into such a position as this, through your trust in me, the least I can do is to justify your confidence. But do not be so despairing, monsieur. I really think I can get you away safely sometime soon. Meanwhile —"

But Zachary was rude enough to interrupt her.

"I don't think you can, mademoiselle," said he, with a transparent attempt at lightness.

"You must not undervalue my powers so far as that," she retorted, "just because I am not able to openly override the governor's will. My uncle is very dear and kind-hearted in many ways, — at times; but I found that he had quite set his heart on hanging you this morning, as an example and encouragement to your compatriots. So I was compelled to change your prison cell. I fear his Excellency will be a dangerous neighbour to his attendants when he opens the blockhouse and finds it empty. He was up nearly all night entertain-

ing his guests, and he is a bit impulsive this morning. Oh, monsieur, you have no idea how he wants you!"

"Yes, I have a faint idea!" laughed Zachary, softly. "I saw his face as he set out a few minutes ago, and I felt so glad I was not to have the honour of meeting him just at present."

"You saw his face?" exclaimed Anne, with trepidation. "You were surely not so foolish as to show your face at the window, — Oh, surely not!"

She wrung her small, brown fingers in despair.

Zachary was filled with contrition.

"I kept well back," he declared, "so no one could possibly see me. But please forgive me, if it has worried you. And I'll promise not to go near the window again unless in the dark."

"Are you sure no one saw you?" questioned Anne.

"Quite sure, most puissant lady," answered Zachary, with confidence. He had quite forgotten his first moment of heedlessness.

Thus reassured, Anne relented.

"Well, monsieur, as there will be little to occupy you here except looking out of the window, I will have a transparent screen placed before it, through which you can safely see everything without any risk of being seen. But I must ask, I must demand, that you be most careful all the time, both as to the window and as to any sound or motion that might betray you to any one passing outside this door. I'm afraid you are rash and headlong, a little, monsieur; and if you won't be careful on your own account, please don't forget how — embarrassing it would be for me if you should be discovered."

"I shall not forget, believe me, mademoiselle," replied Zachary. "I say it with the more confidence, because I can't think of anything at all but you."

"It is only fair to say," went on Mademoiselle, rather hastily, "that I am considered somewhat eccentric as it is, because I choose to wander around the woods with my little musket (which was made in Paris especially for me) instead of sitting in the house or in the garden, working embroidery all day long. I should die, trying to live that way. You

must have thought me rather peculiar, — and, in a way, — bold, monsieur."

Zachary's face glowed with delight as he watched her.

"I thought you a miracle, a miracle of everything that was bewildering and enchanting," he vowed, having already reached the stage when he believed himself to have fallen hopelessly in love with her the instant his eyes fell upon her face.

"Yes, a miracle, — a freak," retorted Anne, with a flash of mockery. "I knew you thought me queer, Monsieur Cowles. Well, the point I am anxious to impress upon you is this, that at present my supposed eccentricity is considered harmless. I am not, I fear, regarded as a good exemplar for the daughters of Acadie; but being the governor's niece, — and, well, supposed to be somebody on my own account, in New France or in Old, — I can do as I like up to a certain point."

It was little Zachary cared whether she were princess or peasant, so long as she was what he found her.

"If you were of the blood royal, mademoiselle," he said, gravely, not as one tenders a

compliment, but as one states a pregnant truth, "you could not be more sovereign than you are, — nor less so, if your father had sprung from the hovels."

This speech interested Anne, confirming an impression which had been borne in upon her from the first by the New Englander's air and bearing. "He is of good blood himself," she thought, "or he could not be so indifferent on the subject. Truly, he has a most lordly confidence. If I were a duchess he would not think me beyond his reach; and if I were a peasant he would think himself well-born enough for both." And she laughed a little half-indulgent, half-approving laugh, which Zachary strove in vain to interpret. He could not see anything in his speech to amuse her. He gazed at her with a puzzled expression.

Anne made a gesture with her hands as if laying aside an unimportant subject. Then she continued from where she had left off speaking.

"Up to a certain point, monsieur, as I was saying. And up to that point, my uncle, who is extremely individual himself, likes to see me going my own way, which chances to harmonize with his. When his foot will permit,

he and I go hunting together, — and he doesn't see any sense in working embroideries, at any time. But if it should appear that in my solitary wanderings I was given to capturing strange gentlemen, and keeping them locked up in blockhouses and lofts, I think his Excellency's views would change, and the tongues of the good ladies of Acadie would find dear occupation."

At this suggestion, at the idea of Mademoiselle being criticized, Zachary's face flushed with anger.

"They would not dare to take liberties with your name, surely," he protested. Then the anger faded into solicitude, as he realized that it was he who was putting her in such jeopardy.

"Oh, I cannot have it that you should run such risks for me!" he cried, in great distress. "I must not stay here. I must get away at once. I can hide in the woods, — and wait, and just wait, till you can come and see me for a moment."

"That is nonsense," said Anne, decisively. "You would be tracked, and caught, and killed, within twenty-four hours. No, monsieur, your part is to curb your rashness, and strictly obey

me. Then I shall not be exposed to criticism. Do you understand?"

"I shall be a model of obedience," answered Zachary.

"And now, after these little necessary explanations," said Anne, with a businesslike air, suddenly forsaking her post at the door, and flitting about the room, "I must consider what is necessary for you here. It is a wretched place, and shames my hospitality" (she had forgotten that he was a mere prisoner), "but Father Labillois and I can manage to make it possible for you to live in. Don't expect elegance, however, monsieur," she added, laughingly. "It may be hot, — oh, it is hot, — here under the roof. The window must be kept open." And she ran and opened it, letting in a breath of sweet, mild air. "But you must not go near to shut it, even in a storm, mind. Of course, if you should come to distrust my protection, you could escape by climbing down the vine from the window, for you are not on parole, — as I remember?"

She looked at him inquiringly.

"Yes, indeed, I am, mademoiselle!" he declared, with conviction.

"Well, I accept your parole, anyway," pursued Anne. "We cannot have a divided responsibility; and you could never hope to get away by yourself. So you will please consider that that window is securely barred."

"Yes," said Zachary, ambiguously, "there is no escape for me except by your will. Never was prisoner more fast fettered."

"That is well, monsieur," she answered, civilly unconscious of his meaning. "And now you must be nearly starved to death. I will ask Father Labillois to bring you something at once." And she laid her hand on the door.

"'Pon my word, I had forgotten all about breakfast," exclaimed Zachary, with unassumed surprise. "And truly, I am not hungry, — not a bit. Please don't go yet. There are so many things, — so many questions I want to ask you. I remember them when I am alone, and they seem vitally important. But when I see you I forget — everything."

But Anne would not linger. Shaking her head, and laying one finger on her lip, she resolutely opened the door, and passed out.

Then, with the door half-closed, she whis-

pered, smilingly, "Be patient. I will see you again, perhaps, some day," and disappeared. Zachary listened to the key as it turned in the lock.

"In very truth, I am her prisoner indeed," he muttered to himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PLIGHT OF GIL

AS far as the beginning of the Vardeau trail, his Excellency had made the journey with comparative comfort. But when he got into the saddle, and his foot into the stirrup, then his trouble began. He set his teeth, and bore the torment without a murmur. But his followers noted that he was growing paler and paler as he rode; and they wondered uneasily what direction his energy would take when anything should occur to loose his pent-up feelings. All went well, however, till the blockhouse was reached. With most cautious assistance, he dismounted, and stretched himself full length on the sward for a few minutes. Then, when the wonted colour had come back to his grim old face, he was helped up. Having seated himself on a log

about ten paces from the door of the blockhouse, he signed to the young aide and to Gil (whom he had found sitting patiently on the threshold) to go in and fetch the prisoner.

As Gil undid the heavy bar, while the soldiers stood by with loaded weapons lest the prisoner should make some desperate dash for freedom, there was a moment of such tense expectancy that his Excellency even forgot he had a foot. Then, to every one's surprise, the door yielded to the first push, and swung wide open.

Gil felt a pang of apprehension. Since his arrival at the blockhouse he had wondered at the profound silence within, but, being absorbed in his own emotions, had concluded easily that the prisoner was aware of his presence and emulating the furtive tactics of the wild creatures. But the fact of the door being unfastened on the inside upset this theory. His Excellency ordered both him and the young officer aside, and sent in three of the soldiers.

With finger on trigger the soldiers entered cautiously, and peered about the gloom. As

nothing happened, Gil's heart sank. That some one had been there he knew perfectly well. Now he knew that that some one had been released. The governor would wreak his wrath on him. For a moment he trembled. Then he steeled his nerves and set his long jaw. What matter what might happen? He had had a night of wonder. Nothing could undo that. And it was not reasonable to think that Lizette really cared. What mattered anything? He was happy.

His reverie was interrupted by the sound of the soldiers turning over some boards and slamming the cupboard door. In a moment more they came out, looking ashamed of themselves. There was no one there. But they brought with them proof that some one had been there, — a brace of English pistols, such as only officers carried.

The governor's face was dull red with baffled rage. Every one held his breath for an explosion, — but when his Excellency at last spoke, he spoke with a quietness that was more dangerous than an explosion.

"The prisoner has escaped," he said, slowly turning his narrowed eyes upon Gil.

Gil bowed respectfully, but met the fierce gaze without flinching.

"I fear he has, your Excellency, but through no fault of mine. No one has crossed that threshold since I arrived here to guard it."

"You have slept at your post," sneered the old man. "You know what happens to men who sleep at their post. You shall hang in his stead."

At this brutal decree the woodsman's gaunt face flushed, and the dark veins knotted on his forehead. He was no peasant, to cringe or grovel. He straightened himself to his full height, then said, deliberately:

"I suppose I shall, if it pleases your Excellency. Your Excellency's power is above justice."

"Take charge of him. Tie his hands. Shoot him if he tries to escape," ordered the old man coldly, turning to the soldiers. Then to his orderly, "Help me to my horse."

The only person who could utter a word of protest, of course, was the young officer.

"Will you not allow me to suggest, your Excellency," he stammered, all embarrassment and respect, "that several hours must have

elapsed before Beaudy's return to keep watch on the blockhouse. Is it not most probable that the prisoner escaped during that time?"

The governor was mounting while the young man spoke, and made no reply till firmly seated in the saddle. Then he turned upon the speaker with a cold glare.

"You, monsieur, will mind your own business," said he.

The young man flushed, and all his embarrassment forsook him in a second.

"Your Excellency forgets that I am a gentleman, and an officer of the king's army," he said, firmly. "It is my right to protest against an outrage, though it is not in my power to prevent it."

For a moment it looked as if the old soldier would ride him down. He curbed his fury, however, and merely said: "An officer of the king's army will obey his superior officer. You will ride straight to Port Royal, and report yourself under arrest till further orders."

The young man saluted stiffly, and rode off at a gallop down the trail, at the risk of breaking his horse's legs and his own neck. Then the governor turned to his little squad, and

ordered them to fall in; and the homeward march began, Gil towering a head above his guards, and walking arrogantly, with his hands tied behind his back. He was engrossed in wondering how Lizette would feel when she saw him brought back to Cheticamp in this plight.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MANAGING OF HIS EXCELLENCY

AS the rumble of his Excellency's wheels was heard approaching the manor-house, Lizette rushed to the window. She had been apprehensive all the morning. Behind her stood Mademoiselle, sympathetically and half-amusedly understanding the girl's interest, but utterly unconscious of her apprehension. Not for a moment had it occurred to Anne, absorbed in her own problem, that there was any possible peril to Gil in the part which she had forced him to play, as it were, blindfold. She had a painful surprise, therefore, when the party came in sight, and Lizette, with face gone suddenly white as her little cap, wheeled about and clutched her by the arm.

"You will save him! You must save him, mademoiselle!" the girl cried, wildly, in a

voice of mingled appeal and demand. "He did it for you. It was for you I made him do it! You will save him!"

"Why, what do you mean, child?" asked Anne, a little coldly. The demand in Lizette's voice jarred upon her. "Save whom? From what?"

"Oh, don't you see? Gil! The soldiers have arrested him. They have tied his hands behind his back!" And Lizette wrung her own hands, and pounded them on the window-sill. "That dreadful old man will hang him — because the prisoner has escaped. And it's my fault. No, it's your fault, mademoiselle. I see it all. You wanted the prisoner to escape, and you didn't care what happened to any one else!"

Mademoiselle's eyes opened very wide. Twenty-four hours earlier she would have been haughtily indignant that Lizette should presume to reproach her, either justly or unjustly. But twenty-four hours had worked much change in her, making her more human and more comprehending. She understood the situation in a flash, and forgot to feel any resentment. She forgot to wonder how much

Lizette knew about there having been a prisoner. She even forgot to repudiate the charge of her own personal interest in that prisoner; indeed, so inconsistent is the heart of woman that she felt a little thrill of pleasure at the charge. But what she thought of was the plight of the man who had served her, and that plight she now saw for herself and understood.

"There, there, child!" she answered, gently. "Don't be afraid. Indeed, I never thought of the danger to poor Gil. But of course I will save him. He has done me a greater service than you think, Lizette, you and he together. Don't be afraid."

The girl's tense face relaxed, and she kissed Anne's hand humbly, as if begging pardon for her impetuosity. But then, as she glanced from the window again, her fears returned.

"Oh, go at once, I implore you, mademoiselle," she cried. "They may hang him at once. Just see the dreadful look on his Excellency's face." And she almost pushed Mademoiselle, in her excitement.

As a matter of fact, the look on his Excellency's face was now more pain than rage,

for his foot was torturing him horribly, and there was small satisfaction or diversion to be got out of hanging one of his own men. Moreover, he had his own misgivings, and could not help feeling that there might be room for doubt as to the strict justice of his position. This doubt it was, rather than unmitigated vindictiveness, which combined with his torture to make his grim face more terrible than ever in its grimness. Anne could not know this, however, and it was with no light heart that she ran out to meet her uncle.

She was beside the carriage, bareheaded, as it stopped, having apparently come out with the purpose of helping his Excellency to alight.

"Oh, dear!" she murmured, commiseratingly, "how ill you look! Is the poor foot hurting terribly?"

"Most damnably!" growled the old soldier. But his face brightened, nevertheless, for he was not only pleased by her solicitude but glad of the assistance of her light, unerring hand.

The squad of soldiers, with Gil in the centre, had halted, awaiting orders. Anne's eyes rested on them inquiringly.

"But where is your English prisoner?" she asked.

The old soldier's face darkened ominously.

"Gone when we got there. Some one had let him out. And he was an officer. Here are his pistols."

"Oh!" said Anne.

"No good talking about it!" muttered his Excellency, bitterly. "He's saved his neck for the present, — but we'll have him yet! Your arm, little one."

"No, uncle, your foot first," contradicted Anne, slipping her hands under the cushion, and deftly transferring cushion and foot together to the carriage step.

"How is it no one else can manage it like that without hurting me?" demanded his Excellency, glaring at his orderly so that the latter straightened up with a start and nervously saluted.

Anne made no reply to this, but raised her head and stared at the squad of soldiers as if she had just observed a captive among them.

"But what has Beaudy done?" she asked, in a voice of frank concern. "That's Gil Beaudy, is it not?"

His Excellency evaded her interrogating eyes. He answered roughly, though with a tinge of hesitation. Without realizing it himself, he set great value upon the good opinion of this wayward and independent little niece of his.

"He was sent to guard the prisoner! The prisoner has escaped. I hold Beaudy responsible, that's all."

"But what is going to be done to him?" persisted Anne, anxiously.

"He must have slept when he should have been watching," answered his Excellency. "I need not tell you, a soldier's daughter, the penalty for that crime!"

"Do you know he was guilty of that crime, my uncle?" asked Anne, quietly.

"It's plain enough!" persisted his Excellency. "Either that, or he connived at the escape, which is worse. He must take the consequences. And you, my child, must not meddle with what does not concern you."

"But this concerns me very deeply," said Anne, taking her uncle's hand. "I know Gil Beaudy well, and know he is not only one of the best woodsmen in Acadie, but a

brave and honest man. I do not believe for a moment that he would sleep at his post, uncle. Do you think, yourself, that is much like a man of his stamp? Oh, uncle, you are not going to take a man's life in that careless way!"

"I am not going to be pestered," burst out the old soldier, "either by you, Anne, or by that young cub D'Aulnay, whom I have put under arrest for interfering. This is my business, and I know my duty. Now drop the subject!"

"You know — for I was with you when Monsieur d'Aulnay brought you word — that there were several hours in the night when the blockhouse was unguarded," pleaded Anne, keeping firm hold of her uncle's fingers with one hand, while the other rested on the knee of the ailing foot, so that he really could not well get away till she was ready to move. "Surely, surely, you must see that it was during that time that the Englishman escaped!"

The governor merely set his jaw and tried to get out of the carriage. But Anne, apparently unconscious of what she was doing, held her position, with such an earnest grasp on

his knee that he could not move it without excruciating torture.

"You cannot hang a man like Gil when it's so clear that he's innocent!" persisted Anne. "It's simple murder, uncle, that's all. *And all the world would say so!*" She knew this would touch the old soldier. "Give him to me, uncle. Give him to me. You can't treat my favourite so, who has taught me all my woodcraft, and made me fit company for you in your hunting!"

It was a cunning stroke on Anne's part, opening this exit to his Excellency, when she knew that he could not with dignity acknowledge that he cared what the world would say. The obstinate old fighter would not yield, lest he should seem to acknowledge that he had been in the wrong. But he seized the opportunity for a dignified compromise.

"It cannot be, my child," he said, "even to gratify you. But to please you, nothing shall be done about the fellow's punishment at present, I promise you that. He shall have the fullest and fairest kind of a trial, after Monsieur de Viron returns. And what's more," — for his Excellency was beginning to feel a sense

of relief at having extricated himself from a very unpleasant position, — "I will promise that he shall not be punished unless monsieur, and that impudent young cub D'Aulnay also, are satisfied as to his guilt."

Anne treated him to a ravishing smile of approval, and kissed him on the cheek.

"I knew you could not do anything that was not just, dear uncle. But really, you were so savage that I was frightened." And very tenderly she helped him into the house.

Anne had gained her point for the time. But she felt by no means secure. She now had a second problem on her hands, — the rescue of Gil from the guard-house, whither a gesture from his Excellency had sent him. Her mind shrank at the thought of such an additional complication. With all her confident daring, she began to feel as if a net were being drawn around her, and a harassed look, strangely foreign to her bright, fearless face, came into her eyes. She had every confidence that De Viron would give the prisoner a perfectly fair trial; and she knew that young D'Aulnay would be just at any cost. But her fear was lest it should come out in any way

that Gil had been an hour late in getting to his post. If that were discovered, his Excellency's position would be in some degree justified, according to the rigid code prevailing in time of war. Gil's fate would be sealed. His blood would be on her hands, and on Lizette's, who had so strangely and inconsistently fallen in love with him.

The whole situation was badly tangled. But behind it all, like a black mass ready to topple over upon her, was the knowledge that she was to be given in marriage to De Viron within four days. She knew very well that De Viron would come on the day appointed, whether affairs had been settled with the English ship or not. He had come from Quebec to marry her, not to fight the battles of Acadie. That peril she had not yet found courage to frankly face, though she knew that she was only enduring its menace so calmly because, at the back of her brain, she was cherishing a wild, desperate, not yet to be formulated hope of escape.

In her perplexity and loneliness, Anne went to look for Father Labillois, in whose temperate wisdom she put great faith. She hoped

that he might find a way to obtain Gil's pardon without trial, and so relieve her shoulders of one crushing responsibility. But on her way to find the good priest, she was intercepted by Lizette, who at once inferred everything that was worst from her troubled countenance.

Tears streaming down her face, the girl almost dragged her into her room, and closed the door. But Anne's instant smile reassured her, and in her excitable way she passed at once to extravagant delight and gratitude, kissing the hands of her mistress and calling down upon her head all the blessings of all the saints. But Anne promptly checked her transports.

"Not so fast, Lizette. It's true, I bring you good news, but not good enough to quite satisfy us. Gil is safe, for a few days, absolutely. But his Excellency was very savage and hard. All I could obtain, for the present, is a pledge that Gil shall have a full and fair trial before Monsieur de Viron, and also that he shall not be punished unless both Monsieur de Viron and young Monsieur d'Aulnay (who, it would seem, spoke up rather boldly

for Gil over at the blockhouse) are both quite assured of his guilt."

"Then why should there be anything to fear, mademoiselle?" asked the girl. "Monsieur de Viron and Monsieur d'Aulnay are just men, I am sure."

Anne's gravity relaxed for an instant. "You should know best, Lizette, whether Gil *quite* attended to his duty or not."

But Lizette was obstinate. "I am quite sure, mademoiselle, that the prisoner could never have made his escape after Gil went on guard," she declared.

"But he was at least an hour late in getting there, I think you assured me, child," pursued Mademoiselle de Biencourt.

A brightness came in Lizette's tear-stained face at the memory of that hour, her hard-won triumph and her triumphant defeat.

"It was nearer two, mademoiselle! But how is any one to know about that except ourselves and Father Labillois, and some one else."

Anne looked at her searchingly. "What makes you bring in — Father Labillois?" she queried.

"Oh, mademoiselle," replied the girl, proud

of her discernment, "Gil and I, standing by the garden fence, saw the good father hurrying by. Gil said he was on his way to some sick person. But I knew, right off, mademoiselle, that he was like myself, on some business of Mademoiselle's. He and I, who else, are the ones who love Mademoiselle so much as to do any bidding of hers with our eyes blindfolded."

Anne touched the girl's disordered hair lightly with her finger-tips, and returned to the subject of the trial.

"You never can tell, child, what eyes may have seen you and Gil at an hour when he should have been at the blockhouse. You never can tell what might come out at the trial. No, the risk is too great. I could never forgive myself if — if anything went wrong! We dare not face the trial, Lizette. We must get him free before that!"

The tone in which Anne spoke was so convincing, and proved so fully that she had taken upon herself the whole responsibility for Gil's case, that Lizette veered all at once to a state of confident elation. As long as Mademoi-

selle really cared to, she could do anything, that was Lizette's faith.

Her face grew as joyous as a child's from whom the fear of some punishment has just been removed. She became her old self again, and even dared to say, with a sly little laugh:

"What will you do, mademoiselle? I think you know just what to do with prisoners!"

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFIDENCES

UNDER the circumstances, Mademoiselle de Biencourt could accept the thrust with good grace. It was a strength to her in her bewilderment and terror to have a confidante of her own sex, who had become, by so whimsical a stroke of fate, suddenly qualified to understand and sympathize. In fact, she had unwittingly bound Lizette's destinies in with her own. She felt so drawn to Lizette now, the more since the girl had shown such soundness of feeling as to fall in love with a man like the tall woodsman, that the social difference between them tended, as far as she was concerned, to slip somewhat into the background. She was glad to identify Lizette's hopes and fears with hers, and felt herself much less alone when she could say

"we" instead of "I." Father Labillois she knew she could depend upon, in one sense, to the utmost. He would be loyal at any cost, and loving under any test. But she knew that he would not actively assist her if he believed she was doing wrong; and she felt that something she had vaguely in mind to do might go beyond his conscience.

"You speak more truly than you think, child," she said, slowly, after a moment's consideration. "I know I can trust you. I know you love me. And I need your sympathy and help. Yes, I do seem to know something about what to do with prisoners, for I have one of my own, and a great responsibility he is, Lizette! And I have plans, too, that concern us both, but I'm not quite ready to talk about these plans yet."

"Mademoiselle, you can trust me to the death, whatever happen!" said the girl, giving her mistress a deep look. Then her curiosity, so long at white heat, could hide itself no longer. That Mademoiselle de Biencourt, all by herself, should have a prisoner in hiding — why, it was like a marvellous fairy-tale. "Oh, tell me, mademoiselle. I've been choking

with questions ever since you sent me off on such a strange errand last night. Who is he? Where is he? Where did you get him? What can you do with him? How on earth —"

But Anne laid her hand on the eager lips.

"Stop! stop! One at a time!" she protested, with a smile. "He is an English officer, — a Bastonnais. He drifted ashore here yesterday morning, having got lost in a fog the day before. I caught him, all by myself, — took away his boat when he had gone up the shore, then covered him with my gun, and had him just agreeing to surrender and hand over his sword, when something I said offended his honour; so telling me I could shoot him if I liked, he refused to surrender, turned his back on me, and stalked off into the woods, as if he owned all Acadie, if not the world. I followed, keeping out of sight, and saw him beat two ruffians who attacked him, in a beautiful fight. Then he came to the old blockhouse, and while he was inside hunting for something to eat, I shut the door and barred him in. There I soon got him to surrender, and to give me his sword. Of course, that made me responsible for his life. I explained

to Father Labillois, who was very nice about it, and terrifically amused, and finally took the poor fellow some dinner. So you can see, Lizette" (Anne here swerved from her story), "that when I found his presence in the block-house had been discovered — your Gil did that! — and that his Excellency was going to hang him for a pirate (he is from the *God's Providence,* you know), I was in honour bound to protect him at any cost!"

"Yes, of course, mademoiselle," cried Lizette, who had been listening to every word with wide eyes and open mouth. "But where is he now?"

Anne looked at her with a slow, mysterious smile before replying. Really it was a wonderful comfort to pour out the story in this way to Lizette's most sympathetic ears. Then a light danced into her eyes. She was only a girl, after all; and she had been frightfully serious for hours, till she felt herself a hundred years old; and, after all, though the game be life and death, it is yet a game. At last, when she thought that Lizette had been sufficiently tried, she whispered:

"He is up-stairs, locked up safely in the loft above this room."

Lizette's gasp of astonishment and delight was adequate tribute to this climax. But her curiosity was not satiated even yet.

"And what is he like, mademoiselle?" she asked presently, seeing that Anne seemed to have no more to say.

"Like?" exclaimed Anne, with a start, a little thrill of enthusiasm in her voice. Then she caught herself up short. "Oh," she went on, indifferently, "tall, as these English are apt to be. And not bad looking. And — youngish, I should say, or *not* so very. And fairish. With a nice voice and charming manners, — a gentleman, obviously. I can't describe him exactly, Lizette. I've really seen very little of him, you know!"

It was Lizette's turn now to laugh, — a slow, meaning laugh. Anne's indifference had been too elaborate to be convincing. Lizette kept up that soft, significant laughter till a flush began to rise in her mistress's cheeks. Then suddenly she stopped, and a look of utter consternation spread over her face.

"But, oh, mademoiselle, what will become

of him after — after the wedding? Only four days! What will Monsieur le Comte de Viron say?"

Mademoiselle's eyes blazed.

"There won't be any wedding!" she burst out, passionately. Then she caught herself up, and stopped to think. This was the first time she had frankly said so much, even to herself. But, having said it, she knew it was true. "I mean, Lizette," she went on more quietly, "that the Count de Viron will have nothing whatever to say as to my actions. I will not marry him." Then a tremor of suppressed indignation came into her voice. "I'm not a baby, to have my life mapped out for me. I'm not a simple schoolroom miss to be married off to any man my guardian happens to choose for me. I'll — I'll go into a nunnery rather than give myself to the man I don't love."

A day earlier, all this would have sounded excessive and eccentric to Lizette, and she would have done her little best to combat such dangerous sentiments. She would have fought De Viron's battle with every artifice in her power, and, in doing so, would have been

fighting her own. She would have seen her dreams of gay Quebec (gay by comparison with Cheticamp, though gray enough in fact) tumbling like spent poppy petals, and would have been overwhelmed in despair. To-day it was all so different! The dreams of Quebec had lost their magic, for they seemed to have no place in them for Gil. And she now felt that it was quite reasonable and natural that Mademoiselle should object to marrying a man with whom she did not chance to be in love. Of this sweeping reversal of all previous notions, the girl was honestly unconscious. So she cried, heartily: "Of course, mademoiselle, I should think so indeed. It must be terrible to marry a man you don't love! But poor Monsieur de Viron will be very unhappy!"

Anne smothered a guilty feeling that she had not fully enough prepared the count for such treatment.

"I never actually said I would marry him," she murmured. "It was his Excellency who did it all, without so much as a 'by your leave' to me. Let *him* get out of it as best he may."

"But he can shut you up till you give in,"

said Lizette, rather awed at the idea of an open defiance to authority.

"Then — I'll run away!" exclaimed Anne, with a burst of resolution, as if the idea had just at that moment occurred to her.

Lizette eyed her searchingly, while daring thoughts crowded into her brain.

"But if you do, mademoiselle," she almost whispered, leaning nearer, and making a dramatic pause between each word, "it will not be to a nunnery, that I'm sure of. I think, mademoiselle, that the tall Englishman, who is so beyond all doubt a gentleman, will have something to say about that!"

Anne flushed furiously. What the girl's words did was to pluck forth her own thought from her heart and force her to confront it fairly, and she was overwhelmed with confusion at her own daring in having harboured such a thought.

"How dare you, how dare you even think of such a thing, Lizette!" she cried, striving to be angry, but not deceiving her listener in the least.

"You know it is true, mademoiselle," retorted Lizette, boldly, triumphantly, and half-

teasingly. Then she remembered Gil, and grew very earnest. "Oh, mademoiselle, don't pretend now. I know you love this stranger, — and he must be worthy of you or you wouldn't love him. Don't pretend one bit, for think how short the time is, and so much to do, and such terrible dangers!"

It was a marvellous reversal of their positions, for the moment. Anne dropped her eyes with strange humility, and spoke very softly.

"I don't know, Lizette. It is hard to believe of myself, and fills me with shame; but I'm half-afraid you are right."

"You're glad I'm right, dear mademoiselle!" interrupted Lizette, crooning over her with fervent tenderness, and kissing the sleeve of her white gown. But Anne went on without heeding the interruption.

"I think I liked him the instant my eyes fell upon him, his face was so clear and fearless, so boyishly frank; and for all his confident courage, he was really, as I knew, so helpless and alone and in peril. I felt that I must look out for him whatever happened."

"I don't see anything to be ashamed of,"

said Lizette, stoutly. "It's everything to be proud of, the way you've done, mademoiselle."

"Oh, child, can't you see?" Anne drooped her head still lower. "Why, I've been letting myself think about a man when I have no reason whatever to suppose he gives a second thought to me!"

Anne de Biencourt was by nature and on principle a peculiarly frank woman, but in matters of this sort no woman can be altogether frank all at once. She must come at it step by step. But Lizette laughed in utter derision.

"Oh, mademoiselle, mademoiselle!" she cried, softly, "who knows better than you that no man living can keep his heart if you lift your eyes upon him to call it forth from his breast."

Anne shook her head, but a trifle hypocritically. She could not help remembering, with a thrill, the way Zachary had looked at her that morning, — and, most of all, perhaps, the way his eyes had met hers when she was admitting him and Father Labillois at the garden door. She could not help remembering, too, those speeches of his which she had refused

to understand. She told herself that they were mere courtly compliment, those speeches, — though at the same time she knew in her heart that she was building upon their truth. She made no reply to Lizette's words, but continued to shake her head in protest, and waited anxiously in the hope that the girl would say something more of the same sort.

But Lizette had nothing more of the sort to say. It was all too obvious, that, for her to belittle Mademoiselle's powers by dwelling upon it. Rather — for four days seemed to her too terribly short a time for what they had to do — she sought to turn Mademoiselle's thoughts to instant action.

"No matter how much he loved you, mademoiselle," she said, craftily, getting at her point by indirection, "how would you dare to try to escape with him? Where could you go?"

"How would I dare, Lizette?" exclaimed Mademoiselle, impetuously. "What could I be afraid of? I would rather be in a hut in the woods with him than in a royal palace with —" But here she broke off abruptly, flushed to her ears, and covered her face with

her hands. She had not intended even to think the thing that she now had said aloud.

Lizette paid no attention to her distress.

"Will you let me tell you what I think is a little bit of your plan, mademoiselle?" she asked.

Anne nodded, without uncovering her face.

"I think," went on Lizette, scarcely above a whisper, — "I think you are wondering how to free Gil, and have Gil get the Englishman away, and then have them take us away, mademoiselle. Please don't shake your head, because I know that thought is somewhere in your heart! Of course, you'll have to take me, because you'll need me, even in the woods, — and because I couldn't live, really, away from you — and Gil!"

Anne uncovered her face.

"You clever little Lizette!" she answered; and, though her face was still covered with hot blushes, she laughed softly, as if the picture Lizette's words called up was sweet to her. "I do believe there was some such idea in my mind. Gil is such a cunning woodsman that he could guide us through the woods, and throw all pursuers off our track. You

see, child, I know much better than you do how clever he is, that Gil of yours. But we could never be safe in this land of Acadie, Lizette. Gil could guide us to some safe little harbour down the coast, perhaps over among the Tuskets, where there are so many islands to hide away on. And he is sure to have some trustworthy friend among the fishermen, who could be hired to bring his boat and take us, — oh, somewhere where no one could torment us!"

"Then the first thing, the very first thing, mademoiselle," said the practical Lizette, "is to get Gil free, is it not?"

"Yes, surely," answered Anne. "I have no doubt we can manage to fool his guards, or something of that sort, if it has to be done. But that would stir up a hornets' nest; so I'll try first what Father Labillois and I together can do with his Excellency, after his foot gets easier. Meanwhile, I shall have you help me look after Lieutenant Cowles, — that is his name, child, — for he has had hardly anything to eat since noon yesterday, and there has been no time to make that room fit to live in. Father Labillois has taken him some food

of some sort; but you might take him water and a basin and towels, while I go and see what can be done about Gil. And, Lizette, — don't let monsieur talk much, or some one might hear, and wonder at a man's voice in that room."

"I'll go this minute, mademoiselle," answered the girl, eagerly. "I'm dying to see what he looks like."

CHAPTER XVII.

FATHER LABILLOIS IS TROUBLED

WHEN Lizette was gone, Anne's first impulse was to lock her door, darken the room, throw herself down on the bed, and think. But she knew Lizette would be back in a moment, worrying about Gil. Her brain was in a whirl, and her heart on fire. Emotions had crowded upon her so overwhelmingly that she did not know what to do with them, and her old, gay, wayward confidence was all gone. She could not even recognize herself. The girl she had been twenty-four hours ago seemed so different a being. She felt that Lizette had really helped her, in forcing her to confront her own purposes and acknowledge the path which her feet were taking. Yes, she loved this Englishman whom fate had so whimsically thrown into her hands.

She was no longer ashamed to acknowledge it to herself. She was proud of it. But, though she believed that he on his part was already in love with her, she was restless with longing to go and see him again, and catch that look in his eyes again, and reassure herself beyond all chill of doubt. That, however, she would not permit herself to do. It would not be seemly to show herself so interested. And her woman's wit taught her that she might best hasten matters by delay. As for Father Labillois, she was not quite ready to see him yet. She had begun to dread the loving keenness of his eyes; and she was filled with self-reproach to think that she could no longer be quite frank with him. She must think just how far to go with him, and must have her mind made up before seeing him again. Where could she go to think? Oh, the back garden! There in the cool green, the scented shade, the secret, narrow walks between the hedges, her brain would calm itself and consent to work clearly once more. She opened the little door, sped hurriedly past the flower-beds and the rose thickets, turned around the first hedge, — and ran plump into Father Labillois, who was

walking there, with his head down and his hands behind his back.

Anne had to do all her thinking in one second, after all. She caught the priest's arm with both hands.

"Oh, father," she cried passionately, as if she had just come out to look for him and to appeal to him, "what are we to do for poor Gil? Something must be done at once."

This fever of concern, as fervent as any she had shown in regard to the safety of the English prisoner, was something of a relief to Father Labillois. It almost allowed him to persuade himself that her wild anxiety of the previous night had been nothing more than the expression of a generous and sympathetic heart. His brow cleared, and he laid his hand on her head lovingly.

"Of course, something must and shall be done," he answered, cheerfully. "But our good Gil is quite safe for the present, — and comfortable, too, I have no doubt, for he has the fullest sympathy of his jailors. Why this troubled haste, my daughter?"

"Oh," said Mademoiselle, with a shudder, "if anything should happen to him, I should

never get over it. His blood would be on my head."

"Not more than upon mine," said the priest, firmly. "*My* conscience has been troubling me a little, too, as to Gil. But I am certain we have done right, you and I, in saving the Englishman's life, and in saving your uncle from doing a terrible wrong. Gil will come out all safe from the trial, that I am sure of. Monsieur de Viron and Monsieur d'Aulnay are just men."

"Too much justice, father," persisted Anne, significantly, "is what I fear."

"You fear that it might come out that he was a little late in reaching his post? Who is to speak of that? Not you or I. Not Lizette. Not Gil. Don't let this matter trouble you, my daughter; but rather let us think how we are to get our Englishman off our hands."

"That troubles me, too, — oh, terribly, father," confessed Anne, with admirable ingenuousness. "But naturally Gil comes first. I can't help a feeling that some one may have seen him with Lizette when he should have been on guard. That would condemn him at once. I can't think of anything else.

And besides, I must have something comforting to take back to Lizette, poor child."

"Oh, so Lizette's little conscience is troubling her, too!" murmured the priest, with an amused smile. "Well, it certainly ought to! It will do her good."

"Lizette has a big conscience and a big heart," protested Anne. "And, father, curiously enough, it is her heart which is troubling her now more than her conscience."

"You surely didn't set the child to make a tool of her lover!" exclaimed the priest, his face darkening with reproach and rebuke.

"Oh, no, indeed!" Anne hastened to explain. "Far from it. She quite looked down on the big, silent fellow when I set her her task, — when *we* set her her task. But, though he has for months been head over heels in love with her, she found him astonishingly hard to manage, and ended by falling in love with him herself. So you may imagine her state of mind, father."

Father Labillois laughed approvingly. "Upon my word, I didn't give the child credit for such discernment!" said he. "You may

tell her, from me, that I pledge my word that Gil shall not suffer."

"Of course, father, that will make her feel much more at ease, as it does me. Still, wise as you are, and influential as you are, the chances of the trial terrify me. These soldiers are obstinate, and we stand apart, very singularly alone, you and I, do we not? Wouldn't it, perhaps, be still better if we could prevail on his Excellency, in some way, to set Gil free without the risks of the trial? I accomplished a great deal with him this morning, and I could see that young Monsieur d'Aulnay's protest had touched him hard. He was so angry about it that I saw it had made him uneasy. Now, don't you think that this afternoon, perhaps, you could follow it up, and lead him to feel that the less said about his plan to hang Gil the better?"

But to this suggestion Father Labillois returned a decided negative.

"I think it would be a great mistake," said he, "to trouble his Excellency any further on the subject. He would very properly resent my interference, and for you to say anything more might excite suspicions of some sort, if

not now, perhaps later. You see, my daughter, his position was quite untenable before, to which fact you owe your victory this morning. But now, he promises justice, — and justice is all we can seem to demand in this case."

"Then you won't, even for my sake?" said Anne, reproachfully.

"It is for your sake, first of all, that I won't!" returned the priest, with smiling firmness. "And I earnestly beg that you will not say anything more to his Excellency, either. Trust my older head in this."

"Very well, father, I'll do as you say," she agreed, reluctantly. "And thank you so much. You will take *our* prisoner some supper, will you not? And see that his room is made *possible?* After that he will not be quite so much trouble to us, as I have told Lizette (she knew so much already, it was better to trust her altogether), and she will be able to look after him till we can get him away."

With an air of having many things to do, Mademoiselle turned to go back to the house. But Father Labillois stopped her.

"Had we not better consider now," he suggested, "the question of getting him away?"

Anne looked at him out of the corners of her eyes.

"It would be so much simpler, father, if Gil, who *owns* the wilderness, were free!"

"That's true enough, as far as it goes," acknowledged the priest. "But I have in mind one who could — and I am sure would — help us still more effectively, and who would also, if taken into our confidence, make Gil's acquittal absolutely sure. I know that the Count de Viron has no sympathy whatever with your uncle's anxiety to hang an Englishman. He knows very well that these Boston raiders are no pirates, and that they have attacked us in full faith that France and England are still at war. He knows, too, that what this ship has done to us is just exactly what our ships do to the New England settlement whenever they get a chance. He would be in full sympathy with us, and glad of an opportunity to please you, and show himself on your side, so to speak."

Anne turned first red, then white. She felt herself cornered, fairly caught in the very

impasse she had so feared and avoided. Her first impulse was to break away and run for the house. But this, of course, would have been too absurd. For several moments she made no reply. And Father Labillois waited with growing apprehension.

At length, dropping her face low over a piece of honeysuckle which she had plucked and was nervously picking to pieces, she answered, in a low voice, very truthfully:

"Monsieur de Viron must positively not know anything at all about it, father."

"May I ask why not, my daughter?" inquired Father Labillois, very gravely, all his old fears rushing back upon him with redoubled force.

Anne hung her head still lower, and tore the honeysuckle into smaller bits.

"Don't you understand?" she murmured, in a voice that was both pleading and apologetic. "I think — that Monsieur de Viron is in love with me!"

Father Labillois laughed a little shortly.

"That is hardly remarkable, my daughter, seeing that he is to be your husband within four days."

"You *don't* understand, I see plainly, father," persisted Anne, still holding her head down. "I have reason, perfectly good reason, to think he might be unreasonably jealous. Men are apt to be most jealous when there is least reason. Anyway, he might be jealous, for I have tried him pretty severely, father. And the best of men are not to be trusted when they are jealous." Here she lifted her head, and the wonted old imperious light flashed back into her eyes. "In any case," she continued, with scarlet lips shut firmly, "Monsieur de Viron must not be told *anything*. Forgive me, father! But we must think of a better plan than that."

Without waiting for any reply, she turned and ran back toward the house, gathering up her gown till her slim, silk-stockinged ankles twinkled like blown white blossoms against the surrounding green. Father Labillois looked after her in harassed bewilderment. How beautiful, how altogether to be desired she was! And terribly he feared for her. He knew not exactly what it was he feared, but chiefly unhappiness. He wanted her to be safe. And to him the usual, altogether regu-

lar thing naturally seemed the only safe one. As for her explanation of her refusal to have De Viron taken into their secret, it had been very convincing, yet he was not at all convinced. His brain assented, his instinct withheld assent. And it was with anything but tenderness that he thought of the confident-eyed Englishman in the attic room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HIS EXCELLENCY OBLIGES HIS NIECE

ANNE went straight to the library, where she knew her uncle was likely to be found at this hour. She had no intention of referring to the matter of Gil again, for she had promised Father Labillois that she would not; and moreover, she saw the force of the sagacious priest's argument. But she felt that she must broach the dreaded subject of De Viron, and find out, if possible, just when he was likely to return, and altogether equip herself as fully as possible with knowledge that might help her in the difficult enterprise which she had upon her hands. Outside the library door, she paused a second and looked at herself critically in the long mirror in the hall. It was a harassed little face she saw, almost haggard. But she rubbed her cheeks

briskly with both palms, and laughed at herself, and when her uncle's deep "Come in" answered her knock, she entered with a glow and gaiety that brought a smile of welcome to his grim face.

"Your foot is feeling better, uncle, dear!" she exclaimed, running up and kissing him on both cheeks. "I can see it in your face."

"It is your bright face, child, that makes me feel better," answered the old soldier. "Gad, but De Viron is a lucky man! There were no such girls as you in the market when *I* was young, or I wouldn't be a bachelor now!"

Anne tossed her head laughingly, while her colour deepened.

"I don't think him very lucky," she answered, with an ambiguity that was quite lost on the governor.

"And I'll tell you some one else who is lucky, because you are such a brave and tender little girl, Anne," said he.

His Excellency had been thinking over what D'Aulnay had said, as well as what Anne had said. And the more he thought, the more clearly he saw that Anne's pertinacity had

saved him from making a terrible blunder. He realized that he had been blind with pain and bad temper when he proposed to hang Gil in place of the prisoner who had escaped. Also, the more he thought of it in this new frame of mind, the more convinced he was that the escape had been effected before Gil's return to the blockhouse. Anne was therefore particularly high in his favour, and he was genuinely anxious to do her a pleasure. Moreover, added to his real affection for her, there was now an unacknowledged consciousness that as the wife of the powerful Count de Viron she could wield a mighty influence for him at court. Back of these motives, but more potent than he would confess to himself, was an unwillingness to have further attention called to the fact that he had been on the point of hanging one of his own men so unjustly. Here again Anne would be his salvation.

Anne looked puzzled.

"Who is that, uncle?" she asked, with vague hopefulness.

"Gil, my girl!"

"Why, Uncle Marc, what do you mean?" cried Anne, joyously, beginning to understand.

"I have made up my mind to grant you Gil's freedom," said his Excellency, a little grandly, "partly because you so earnestly desire it, Anne, and partly, I confess, because your arguments have convinced me."

With this he rang the bell which stood near him on his desk.

In spite of the fact that her swift, merciless insight saw at once all the mixed motives which stood behind this gracious act, Anne did its graciousness toward herself full justice, and could not quite smother a pang at thought of the mortification and disappointment which she was planning to inflict upon the old soldier. She was the more fervent, therefore, in the gratitude which she manifested by flinging both arms around his neck and kissing him as impetuously as if she had been a child. His Excellency did not seem to find this hard to bear. As she released him he looked at her quizzically, and muttered:

"Gad, child, you spoil me! If you don't look out I'll get so in need of being kissed that I won't want to let De Viron carry you off to Quebec."

"That wouldn't grieve me!" retorted Anne,

with a mocking toss of her head. "I don't see why you want him to, anyway. I'd ten thousand times rather stay here with you than go with him."

This statement his Excellency would hardly have thought worth noticing, except for the compliment to himself. But he was saved the necessity of reply, for at this moment a footman answered his summons. The governor scribbled a line, handed the paper to the footman, and said:

"Take this to the sergeant of the guard at once. And be careful to tell the sergeant, accurately, that I said I was pardoning the prisoner at the request of Mademoiselle de Biencourt, and because of her strong representations in his favour."

When the lackey was gone, his Excellency was forced to endure a repetition of the treatment which he had seemed to endure so bravely before. Then, on plea of urgent household duties, Mademoiselle hurried away. She felt herself at the moment too grateful to her uncle to be properly diplomatic. She could not bear to play the hypocrite just then, as she would have to play it if the question of De

Viron's return and her marriage were brought up. And she registered a heroic and quite comforting resolve that she would deceive his Excellency not one jot more than should prove absolutely, painfully necessary.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW GIL IS MADE TO UNDERSTAND

ANNE went straight to her own room, and rang for Lizette, that she might tell her the good news. But that news had had winged feet. Lizette came in with shining eyes, and such gladness in her face that Anne was marvellously moved at sight of it. Indeed, she was carried away by it, so far that she forgot for a moment all the form and tradition of her class, and was just a woman. She got up, took Lizette's face between her hands, and kissed her.

"I am so glad for you, child," she said, simply. "Can any one really be so happy as you look?"

The girl went right down on her knees in her impetuous gratitude, kissing Anne's hands, and her sleeves, and her skirt. Then, shifting

into a sudden wild gaiety, which she, nevertheless, kept curbed down to such a quiet as could have no interest for eavesdroppers, she sank into a sitting posture on the floor, looked up laughing into her mistress's eyes, and said:

"Oh, yes! *You* will be, mademoiselle! I have seen him, and spoken to him, — and you *couldn't* have done anything else, mademoiselle."

Anne looked away through the window dreamily, trying not to show too foolishly how much this pleased her.

"And he is utterly, utterly in love with you. There is no doubt of that. I saw that in half a minute, mademoiselle," continued the girl.

Anne had so many things she wanted to say, that she said none of them.

"Have you seen Gil yet?" she asked, after a moment's hesitation.

"No, mademoiselle, but I'm going to in a few minutes."

"Will you tell him, now?" asked Anne. She was tired, nerve-tired, and felt that she must, for a little, entrust the reins to other hands.

"If you will permit me, mademoiselle," answered Lizette, dutifully.

"Of course you were going to, anyway; I know that," said Anne, weary and indulgent. "Gil will be loyal to the trust, I know. But will he join us? Will he turn his back on his beloved Acadie, and go into exile? Can you manage him again? It was hard before, child."

"It will be easy this time, mademoiselle, because his duty and his desire will go together. He owes his life to you. Trust me this time, too, mademoiselle."

"Then you may go now, child, and I will leave it to you. I'm going to lie down and sleep a little while. I'm so tired, I feel as if I had lived ten years in the past twenty-four hours."

When Lizette had gone, and closed the door behind her, Anne put her hand out of the window, and plucked a little spray of honeysuckle, and lay down with the blossom on the pillow beside her, and went right to sleep.

Meanwhile Lizette, with a sure instinct, had hurried down through the garden to the farther corner of the orchard, behind the hedge

on the other side of which she and Gil had talked so long the night before. Peering through the leafy screen, she presently saw Gil. He had no definite hope of seeing Lizette there at this hour, but was coming just because of a blind longing for the place where he had been glad, the place that meant to him that first, strange clinging of Lizette's hands. As soon as he was near, the girl said, softly:

"Come around by the little gate, Gil. I'll wait for you here."

In the light that shone, at the sound of her voice, in the woodsman's rugged face, he seemed to Lizette very splendid to look at, — which surprised her, for she had been thinking of him as grim, strong, dear, and ugly. When, about two minutes later, she saw him hastening with long strides down through the pale green aisles of the apple-trees, she decided that he was not ugly, but handsome. It was her old, ignorant standards, she thought to herself, which had been at fault.

When Gil arrived he seemed to have forgotten all his hesitating diffidence. He had apparently not a word to say; but he caught the girl up into his arms without noticing

her firm protests in the least. When he had kissed her and crushed her to his heart's content for a few moments, he set her down all flushed and dishevelled.

"Oh, Gil!" she protested, breathlessly, "I didn't say you might do that!"

This protest did not seem, in Gil's eyes, to require any reply.

"How selfish I am, sweetheart," he said, tenderly, "to keep you on your feet so long. How is the poor little foot? You must sit right down."

Lizette obeyed at once, and stuck from beneath her skirt, for his examination, an exceedingly slim and trim little foot, well slippered and well stockinged, as the foot of Mademoiselle de Biencourt's maid had need to be.

"Why, I believe it is all well, Gil," she answered, eyeing the foot critically, and turning it from side to side, and twisting it. "You are the most wonderful doctor, though a little severe, — and *horridly* bold."

Reverently, — very reverently and calmly, indeed, Gil's great hand covered the small ankle. But Lizette observed that his strong, dark fingers trembled at the touch. He pressed

the joint with searching, skilful finger-tips, and Lizette forgot that she ought to wince a little. A cure so speedy was too much like a miracle. He turned and looked at her steadily with his gray, sagacious eyes.

"Lizette, there is some mystery in all this," said he.

Lizette dropped her lids a little nervously. She could not stand that gaze, — and she got frightened, for a moment, as she found the man forcing her hand.

"If there is," she answered, hastily, "there is none that you need fear, Gil."

"Look at me," he commanded. "I love you, Lizette."

She lifted her eyes for a second, then dropped them again at once, and hesitated for speech. But presently she looked up again with a teasing, challenging laugh.

"Oh, Gil, *that's* no news," she retorted, wickedly. "Every one in Cheticamp has known that for months. But the *news* is that *I* love *you!* There!"

Gil drew a long breath, and sat silent, enfolding her in a look that she felt in every nerve, though she dared not face it. He had

no words, it seemed, great enough to meet her confession. At last he said in a very low voice:

"Did you not say you were going away from Cheticamp?"

"Yes; and I believe I am, very soon. Does that necessarily mean that I am going away from you, Gil? Indeed, you've taken a long time to get me, but you won't easily lose me!"

"Where do you want me to go with you, Lizette?" he asked, gravely.

"I don't know, yet," she answered. "But I do know, — we all know, that his Excellency is marrying my Mademoiselle to Monsieur de Viron, in three days. And Monsieur de Viron intends to carry her off at once to Quebec. If I have to go to Quebec — would you let me go without you?"

"I would not let you go at all," answered the woodsman, setting his long jaw. "I will go to the ends of earth with you, or for you, dear heart, if *necessary*. But what would *I* do in the city? My life is in the wilds, — or was till it fell into your eyes. But who shall say 'go' or 'come' to my wife, Lizette?"

"You will, I'm thinking, dear," retorted the

girl. "But listen, Gil. What would you do for my Mademoiselle?"

"Anything in the world, sweetheart," responded Gil, warmly. "Next to you, she's all I care anything about. And now, I owe her my life first, and then my freedom. What a heart she has! And what loyalty to me, just because I had served her well in her hunting! Oh, Lizette, you should have heard her, how she managed the old butcher this morning, when he was for hanging me right off."

Lizette laughed, well pleased at this outburst of enthusiasm on the part of her rather silent lover. It made her feel more sure of victory.

"You can't tell *me,* my Gil, how good Mademoiselle is. But I'm glad you realize it a little bit. Don't think, however, it was all for you she did it, though she *does* like you, and trust you, and say nice things about you." At this Gil could not help showing his pleasure by a broad, naïve smile. Lizette patted his cheek, and went on: "She did it partly for *me,* you conceited fellow, because she knew I loved you, and couldn't have *lived* if anything had happened to you, through my fault."

"Oh, you told *her!*" exclaimed Gil, opening his eyes very wide in his astonishment. "*Everything?*"

"Of course," rejoined the girl, "whom else should I tell? *She* tells *me*," she added, proudly.

The woodsman had been thinking of Mademoiselle, hitherto, with a remote kind of worship, devout, indeed, but in a way cold, as one might adore Diana. This astonishing statement of Lizette's revealed the goddess to him as none the less goddess, but at the same time very woman, tender and understanding. His heart glowed toward her now with a sudden lyric fervour, making him long to do some great thing in her service.

"How you love her, Lizette!" he said. "And no wonder. I would not try to take you away from her, truly; but, dear, she will no longer need you, and that will make you unhappy. In three days she will have no thought but for Monsieur de Viron. I wish she was getting a kinder man, Lizette."

"I wish she might get some one as strong and kind as *I've* got," murmured Lizette, leaning up against him, — to find herself sud-

denly engulfed, as it were, and for a time deprived of all power of speech. When she regained possession of herself she said, rebukingly: "I told you you mustn't do that, Gil, without leave. You put the ideas out of my head, and I had something very important to say to you."

"That was important," urged Gil. But Lizette was not to be diverted.

"Listen, now, very carefully," she began, possessing herself of his hand, and holding it in her lap. "My Mademoiselle *is* going to need me, terribly. *She does not love Monsieur de Viron.* She *hates* the idea of marrying him. His Excellency has planned it, and is forcing it on, and she is helpless. She will break her poor heart if the count gets her. Just think of that, Gil. Think of me being forced to marry some other man than you!" Gil ground his teeth quietly, but was allowed no time to reply. "Would you have me forsake her? Should we not both stay faithful to her, even if there was hardly anything that we could do to help?"

To the Acadian woodsman, who had no conception of marriages of policy, the thought that

the beautiful and kind Mademoiselle was to be married to a man she did not love was hideous. He got up slowly, looking very stern and troubled.

"It's an outrage! It's — impossible to think of!" he said at last. "Is there nothing that can be done, Lizette?"

The girl reached up delighted hands, and pulled him down again beside her.

"Oh, you dear Gil!" she cried, her eyes shining upon him. "I *knew* you'd understand. I *knew* you'd feel the right way about it, *dear!* Yes, I think there may be something we can do to help, — some great thing *you* can do for her, to save her from such unhappiness."

Gil's face brightened, and he gazed at her expectantly.

"Listen, now, and I'll tell you all Mademoiselle's secrets!" said Lizette, laying her hands on his knee.

Gil looked doubtful.

"Are you sure? Would she quite —" he stammered.

"Certainly!" answered Lizette. "She told me herself I might tell you just as much as I thought best. And I think best to tell you

everything. Mademoiselle is in love with some one else."

"Oh!" said Gil, opening his eyes.

"Who do you think it is?" she went on, in an intense voice.

Gil shook his head.

"Why, the prisoner!" exclaimed Lizette, triumphantly. "The prisoner of the block-house."

"Oh!" said Gil again, this time with many conflicting inflections.

"Yes," went on the girl, rapidly, "he is *Mademoiselle's* prisoner. He drifted ashore yesterday morning, and Mademoiselle captured him herself when she was out hunting, and locked him up in the blockhouse. He didn't try very hard to resist capture, Gil. Then, when she found the governor had got wind of it, and was going to hang him in the morning, she had Father Labillois go and bring him *here,—and he's locked up in the loft here now!* You remember you thought Father Labillois was going to see some sick person. No, he was going to get Mademoiselle's prisoner, and hide him here right under the governor's very nose."

Gil's face had grown so grave during this narrative that Lizette was a little frightened.

"I see it all," he said, thoughtfully. "You kept me just long enough, Lizette."

"Just long enough to fall in love with you, my Gil," said the girl, caressingly.

"And your ankle," he went on. "There was nothing the matter with it!"

"Except when you kissed it, dear," she answered, with cunning wisdom. She was getting very much afraid.

The memory thrilled Gil so that he caught his breath, — and Lizette noticed this.

"Oh, Gil dear, just think!" she cried, hurriedly. "I *did* fool you, it is true. I set out to fool you. But it was in doing so that you taught me to love you. I hadn't really known you before, — hadn't really seen you. If now you really love me, remember what you owe it to, that I love you. I love you, with all my heart and life, — and you have my fooling you to thank for that, — and Mademoiselle to thank. You must surely forgive both her and me, — right off, this very minute, Gil, or I can't stand it. You look so cold and hard."

But by the time she got to these words,

Gil was no longer looking so cold and hard. His clear and fair mind had flashed over each point of the story in swift review, justifying this, forgiving that, and perceiving how it all had turned out to his incalculable blessing. He half-turned, and took Lizette by both elbows while he gazed, half-smiling, deep into her eyes.

"It seems to me," he said at last, with deliberate meaning, "that the best friend I've got in the world, after all, is that English prisoner, whoever he is. What do you think, sweetheart?"

"I think the least we can do is to help Mademoiselle get him away safely, and herself with him, — and me with Mademoiselle, — and you with me," said Lizette, concisely.

The woodsman laughed, — which was an unusual thing for him to do, whose face got rarely beyond a smile. He laughed softly, but long. Then he leaned down, and kissed Lizette's dark hair, over and over. At last he said:

"Dreams *do* come true, after all, sweetheart, once in awhile. It is a beautiful plan. *And I can carry it out.* I know the woods, and the rivers. I can carry you all off by a way that

none can follow, — and I know no one else in Acadie who could."

"That's just what Mademoiselle said," interrupted Lizette.

"Did she?" cried Gil again. "Well, and I can get us all down to the sea, to a port where we will be safe for a little while; and I have friends, with boats, who will take us away, — for Acadie will be no place for any of us, sweetheart, after this."

"That's just what Mademoiselle said, every bit of it," repeated Lizette, triumphantly.

"Did she!" cried Gil again. "Well, your Mademoiselle will be burned for a witch if she doesn't look out. But now, one more thing. What of the good father? Is he in the secret?"

"Only so far," answered the girl, holding up the tip of her finger. "He knows nothing of Mademoiselle's heart. She is afraid to let him know, for fear he should insist on the marriage with De Viron, or upset our plans in some way. The Englishman, you know, is probably a heretic. I didn't think of that before, — but it's too late to worry about it now."

"She had better tell Father Labillois," said

Gil, confidently. "*He'd* never do anything to break her heart. She is the apple of his eye. Get her to trust him altogether, Lizette."

"Why are you so anxious about the good father?" asked Lizette, thoughtlessly.

"He might come in handy," answered Gil. And Lizette dropped her eyes.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GHOST IN THE LOFT

THAT evening Zachary's meal was carried to him by Lizette, who said not a word, but kept her finger on her lips in sign of silence. From this Zachary gathered that some unusual peril was near at hand; and the better to obey Mademoiselle's injunctions, he sat on a box without stirring for a couple of hours. When, at last, there came again the sound of a key turning in the lock, his heart jumped with the idea that it was Mademoiselle coming. He sprang up to meet her at the door, but when he saw it was Father Labillois his face fell so manifestly that the priest could not fail to observe it, and be disquieted by it.

The priest had come to see if there was anything the prisoner needed.

"Nothing but a little of your company,

good father," protested Zachary, begging him to sit down. But Father Labillois would not sit down, would not talk, would not linger. He betrayed an obvious intention to keep the prisoner at arm's length, and to be not one jot more amiable than courtesy might require. After he had gone, this reserve puzzled Zachary a little, without greatly disturbing him.

"Is it because I'm supposedly a Protestant, or just because I'm an Englishman, that the nice old boy doesn't like me?" he wondered for a few moments. Then he dismissed the matter from his mind, and thought of Anne. The fresh night smells of orchard and field which came in through his open window seemed to talk to him of her, so he stole noiselessly across the floor and stood looking out over the gray-green shadowy country, asleep in the starlight.

Zachary's dreams and hopes were beginning now to grow more definite than they had been. Hitherto his adventurous and boyish spirit had been content to let things drift. For adventure he had come away, — and adventure he was getting, certainly. But also for fighting had

he come, — and instead of fighting (for he hardly counted the fight with the two ruffians) he had found love. Well, he had had fighting a-plenty in his life, and of love very little. He was disposed now to do much more than accept his fate, — to capture it, and secure it, and bind it to him for ever, and carry it away. He had now two terrors, — who had had none a few hours ago when his neck was in dire peril. One was, lest Mademoiselle in her generosity might arrange for his escape before he had a chance to woo her. The other, lest his wooing should fail to win. This latter contingency he would not permit himself to face, however. The former was the more imminent, and to be dealt with first. He had never been very seriously in love, but he had enough experience of the malady in mild form to be able to diagnose his present case. Of one thing he grew certain as he stood looking out on the benign night; namely, that his life, hitherto all haphazard and happy-go-lucky, had on the sudden acquired a purpose.

While he was dwelling upon this purpose, a light knock took him swiftly — but this time noiselessly — back to the door. The door

opened, and Anne's pale figure glimmered before him. She would not come in; and she checked all entreaties by a most imperative gesture of silence.

"I just came to bid you good-night and quiet dreams, monsieur," she murmured, so low that he had to lean very near to catch the words. "And to tell you that by to-morrow I hope to be able to tell you that my plans for your escape are perfected."

"I will not go away —" he began to protest, in a whisper, indeed, but with an agitated vehemence that was balm to Anne's anxieties. She checked him, however, with the old imperiousness, and a turn of the head which seemed to signify danger at hand.

"And also," she went on, paying no attention to his interruption, "I came to bring these flowers for your prison cell." And she held up to him a great bunch of honeysuckles which she had been keeping behind her back.

He grasped the hand which held up the flowers and kissed it impetuously. But she slipped it from his hold.

"Good-bye, monsieur — till to-morrow!" she whispered, and shut the door. But as she

went down-stairs she kissed her hand where he had kissed it.

"To-morrow! To-morrow!" she said to herself, under her breath.

On the following morning, just after breakfast, Anne went into the garden, — to cut flowers, ostensibly, but really to try and make up her mind what she was going to say to the prisoner during the call she was about to pay him. As she stood playing absently with a rose which she had picked, Lizette came to her in haste with consternation all over her face. Anne dropped the rose, turned pale, and demanded, "What is it? What's the matter?" before Lizette had a chance to speak.

"It's all around the place, mademoiselle," she answered, "that there's a ghost in the loft. Poor foolish 'Tiste, wandering in the fields last night about midnight, saw what seemed to be the figure of an English officer in the window. It appeared and reappeared several times, till at last he got frightened and ran away. When he told the story this morning everybody laughed at him, till one of the stable-hands had something to say, too. This fellow — I forget his name, mademoiselle — said he

had seen the same figure at the loft window yesterday morning, just as the gentlemen were setting out for Port Royal. It was far back, he said, and kind of shadowy, so he thought he had imagined it; but 'Tiste's story convinced him it was a ghost. Now every one swears something has happened to the prisoner that was in the blockhouse, and that his ghost has come back to haunt his Excellency. What can we do, mademoiselle? His Excellency will hear of it, any moment. Then it will be 'Search the loft!'"

Anne had had time to see it all, and make her plans, while Lizette was so breathlessly rattling off her story. For the moment there was but one secure place at her disposal.

"Run, child," she commanded. "Take Monsieur Cowles down to my room, and lock the door, *telling him to keep away from the windows.* Then remove every trace of the loft having been occupied, and bring me back the key. I'll be in the hall, so that I will know if his Excellency sends for the key, or does anything unusual."

Lizette had been but a few minutes away when a footman arrived, saying that his Excel-

lency wished to see Mademoiselle in the library. This was quicker work than she had expected, and Anne was alarmed for a moment; but she delayed to pick some flowers for her uncle, and went in to him with gay self-possession. She found him somewhat excited, not unnaturally.

"Anne," said he, eagerly, after he had thanked her for the blooms, "what is there in the loft over your rooms? Do you know?"

Anne threw back her small head and laughed merrily.

"Ghosts, it would seem!" she answered. "One of the maids has just been telling me. Uncle, uncle, what have you done to that poor English officer, that his spirit should return to trouble you?"

"Nothing, worse luck!" said the old soldier, savagely.

"Well," said Anne, "if there's a ghost up there it belongs to me, not to your most excellent Excellency! And it couldn't get in there without my leave, for I keep the key. It's my own special storeroom."

"We must have it thoroughly searched at once," said his Excellency, glad of something to think of. "We'll attend to it ourselves, with

one of the servants. Then they will be satisfied. I think I can hobble up there with your help, child."

Anne carefully searched the keys which she was just then carrying at her girdle. Then she minutely searched her pocket. Then she thought for a few seconds.

"Wait one minute, please, uncle, till I get the key. I have left it in the drawer of my secretary, because I use it so seldom." And she ran gaily from the room.

Just at the foot of the stairs, by the door, she met Lizette with the rugs.

"Everything is attended to, mademoiselle," said the girl, laughing, and handing over the key. "And Monsieur Cowles seems pleased."

Anne flushed to her temples, but said nothing except "Thank you, Lizette." Five minutes later, with Lizette's busy assistance, she was showing his Excellency through the loft.

His Excellency was deeply disappointed at finding no one in the loft. He poked curiously into every corner, and, in spite of Anne's mock protests, insisted on examining every box. Some of the garments he admired, *en passant,*

while others he did not seem to understand or appreciate. At length, when there was nothing more to occupy him, he remarked:

"De Viron is getting an astonishingly good little housekeeper, Anne. Why, this loft is as clean as wax."

"Praise Lizette for that, uncle," answered Anne, modestly. "I think she has been cleaning up here quite lately." At which Lizette, his Excellency's daunting eye upon her, dropped a grateful curtsey, and held the door open for them to leave.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOW ZACHARY IS MADE TO UNDERSTAND

ZACHARY, transported to the daintiness and luxury of Anne's own bedroom, sat for a time in an ecstasy of reverence and delight. The scent of the honeysuckle about the shaded windows was mingled with another and more subtle fragrance, almost imperceptible, which he connected with Anne's hair. For a time he sat quite motionless, feeling that to get up and move about might jar the flower-like sanctity of the place. At last, however, some delicate, lacy garments thrown over the back of a chair drew him, till he stepped over and looked at them, but did not dare to touch them. Then he repented his audacity, and turned away, and went over to the bed. Here he stood but a moment. He leaned over and buried his face in the snowy pillow, and kissed

it, and drew a long breath. Then he went away and seated himself resolutely in a big chair in the farthest corner of the room. It held too many sorceries for him, that wonderful room. He dared not face them any longer.

He had sat thus for perhaps an hour, sunk in intoxicating reverie, when there came the light knocking that he knew, and Mademoiselle entered.

"That was a very narrow escape, monsieur," she hurried to explain, before Zachary could say a word. "His Excellency and I have just come from a very searching investigation of the loft, — which, thanks to Lizette's promptness, revealed nothing. But, monsieur, strange stories had reached his Excellency's ears of a ghost being seen at the window last night, as well as early yesterday morning."

Zachary was overwhelmed with mortification and contrition.

"Oh, mademoiselle," he pleaded, "try to forgive my stupidity. With all the trouble and anxiety I cause you, I seem bound to make it more through my own carelessness. But, truly, I kept away from the window most religiously

after you warned me, — both because I couldn't forget anything you said, and because it was a happiness to be meeting any wish of yours, however slight. In the night, however, I went to the window freely, because I understood you to say it was safe then."

Anne certainly did not look severe.

"Yes, I thought it was very safe then," she answered, smiling at him graciously. "It was just an unlucky accident. And not so very unlucky, because there is no harm done after all, and you are so much more comfortable down here."

"This is what I can't bear, mademoiselle, — that I should turn you out of your own beautiful room, where I hardly dare to move or touch anything, because everything so exquisitely breathes of you. This room goes to my brain, mademoiselle. Send me back to the loft. I *can't* put you to such trouble any longer."

Anne shook her head.

"No, Monsieur Prisoner," she answered, "it is not for you to choose your dungeon. The loft will no longer be safe for you, and my room is the *only* safe place, now. For me there are many comfortable places to choose

from. Lizette will take good care of that, you may be sure. But it will not worry you so much, monsieur, when I tell you that to-morrow, if all goes well, I shall be able to give you your freedom, and send you away with a guide who will enable you to reach your own country safely."

Zachary's heart sank, so heavily that for the moment he could not think what to say that might stave off the impending stroke of fate. While he hesitated, the misery in his face was so manifest that Anne could not resist the impulse to notice it.

"Why, monsieur," she murmured, with an attempt at gentle raillery, "your face is not that of a captive about to be freed. It is rather that of one just being led to the executioner."

Zachary's clear, boyish blue eyes looked straight into hers, unconsciously avowing all that his lips dared not yet say. He was almost on the point of pouring out his heart and staking all on the one rash play; but love was teaching him a new and to him very strange humility. As he looked at Anne, — at the slender little feet in their gilt slippers sticking out from under her cream white gown, — at

the slim, girlish figure and slim brown hands, — at the small, thin, dark, radiant, inexplicably enchanting face under its masses of dark, unruly hair, — he could not imagine himself so favoured as to succeed in winning her. All his life long, up to now, he had been daring to rashness, delighting in the hazard of the game, — and now, in a flash, he had grown cautious. Now he realized all at once that all he cared for in life was at stake. The risk daunted him. He wanted more time to lay his siege.

Suddenly he came close, and dropped on one knee before Anne's chair, and took her hand in both of his.

"It seems to me just like sending me to execution, if you send me away from you," he muttered, unsteadily, with his face bent over her hand. "*Don't* send me away yet. I beg you, don't." And he kissed her fingers, more lingeringly than ceremony would countenance, yet not enough to justify her in withdrawing the hand from his clasp.

Anne made no reply; and her silence seeming to Zachary a demand that he should explain his singular objection to freedom, he spoke again.

"You wonder why I make such a request, mademoiselle? I dare not tell you yet. You have known me so short a time (though it seems to me like always), and you know so little of me, that it would be presumptuous of me to tell you what is in my heart. Let me stay near you a little longer. Then, if you wish to send me away from you, it's small concern to me where I go."

Anne's doubts were by this time thoroughly banished, and with the sense of problems solved her heart rose to such a pitch of joy that she felt the need of holding herself with a very firm rein. A subtle change came over her face, and she looked once more the mockingly imperious maid to whom Zachary had tendered his submission on the shore. This in her eyes only, however.

"Since you are so chary, monsieur, of giving your reasons for not wanting me to send you away, I am compelled to give you my reasons for fearing that I must. Certain plans have been made for me by his Excellency, — who, as I think I told you, is my uncle and guardian. If these plans are carried out, in less than three days I shall no longer be in

a position to take care of my prisoner. Would you have me entrust him to other hands, monsieur?"

A terrible fear struck chill to Zachary's heart, but the worst of her possible meaning he refused to admit. His grip tightened painfully on her hand, as he demanded:

"You are not — going away?"

"It has been so arranged," answered Anne, enigmatically.

"Where?" asked Zachary, somewhat abruptly.

Anne hesitated, doubtful just how to pick her words.

"To Quebec," she answered, at last, still avoiding the main point, and forcing him to demand it.

But to her disappointment a new idea had came into Zachary's head at this.

"I could easily go to Quebec," said he. "I have been there twice."

Seeing that this Englishman did not lead easily, Anne was compelled to be more direct.

"Perhaps, monsieur, I might not have so much time to look after prisoners, — if I should go to Quebec," she said, very mean-

ingly. "Did you observe, from your window, a French officer, leading a party of horsemen who set out for Port Royal yesterday morning?"

"Yes," said Zachary, bracing himself for what he now knew must come.

"That was the Count de Viron, a very estimable gentleman, they tell me," continued Anne, in a level, dispassionate voice. "My good uncle has arranged that, day after tomorrow, I am to be married to the Count de Viron, who proposes to take me away on the day following. You see —"

But here she was interrupted by Zachary flinging her hand aside rudely, jumping to his feet, and striding blindly to the door.

"The key is in my pocket, monsieur," she said, softly, as he tried the latch. Then without a word he strode to the opposite corner of the room and stood with his back toward her, as if looking at a picture on the wall. As Anne watched him, and understood the despair in his heart, the mocking light left her eyes, and her lips grew infinitely tender. How simple he was, in a way, not to see what she meant by the guarded way in which she had told

her story. "He thinks," she said to herself, "that I told it that way just to spare his feelings." The smell of the honeysuckle drew in through the window at that moment with thrilling sweetness, and as she breathed it she seemed to herself to be breathing an infinity of joy. And there, at the same moment, stood Zachary in such silent anguish that he was unwilling she should see his face. Her heart melted. She sprang up, and was just on the point of running across the room to — well, she did not know exactly what she would say or do, but to make him understand, and be happy. But before she had taken two steps there came a knock at the door.

Zachary faced around sharply, and stood with stern, gray features that smote Anne to the heart.

"Who is there?" she asked, quietly.

"It's Lizette, mademoiselle," came the low answer. "Can I come in? It's most important."

Anne opened the door, and closed and locked it again the moment the girl had entered. Lizette glanced from her mistress's happy, triumphant face to the granite woe of

Zachary's, — then back to Anne's with a look of mingled amusement and reproach. But the next second her face was grave enough, as she began:

"Monsieur de Viron has returned, mademoiselle, and desires — "

"Monsieur de Viron!" interrupted Anne, coldly. "He was not due to return for two days yet."

"It seems, mademoiselle, that the English ship has sailed away, so there was nothing left for him to do. He was in a great hurry to get back to Cheticamp, mademoiselle," — here Lizette cast a sidelong look at Zachary's face, — "and he begs permission to see you immediately."

"Make my apologies to Monsieur de Viron," answered Anne, "and say that I am particularly engaged, and shall not be able to see him for perhaps two hours yet."

"Yes, mademoiselle," answered the girl. "But his Excellency, too, mademoiselle, he sends to beg that you will see him immediately in the library. I'm afraid it is very important, — pardon me for saying so, mademoiselle.

Monsieur de Viron and he are in there together."

"You have my message," said Anne, impatiently. "It is just the same for his Excellency." Then, as Lizette turned to go, Anne changed her mind.

"No," she continued, "I don't want to seem rude to my uncle, Lizette. But I am troubled about this return. Tell my uncle I have just begun to dress, and cannot be with him for over an hour yet, but that I hope he will forgive me for keeping him waiting. And tell him I send particular inquiries about his foot."

When Anne had let the girl out and locked the door again, she went back to her chair and looked at Zachary in a way that should have saved her the need of further speech. But he, with that supreme stupidity which men of intelligence can rise to when they fall in love, stood stewing still in the bitter juice of his misunderstanding. Anne's cavalier treatment of De Viron's message had conveyed to him no illumination whatsoever. All he could think of was that De Viron was back, and had sent for her. The vastly more significant fact that she had refused to go, choosing rather

to remain with himself, seemed to have missed him altogether.

"I had to tell you all this, monsieur," said Anne, softly. "I thought you had a right to know."

This brought no response, though Zachary might well have asked what she meant.

"You do not understand, perhaps, monsieur," she went on, "that among us French these matters are often arranged by a girl's guardian without consulting the girl's own wishes in the least."

"I had heard that in France women suffered themselves to be so disposed of, mademoiselle," answered Zachary, in a voice of steel. "I had not realized it before."

"Neither had I," agreed Anne, demurely, dropping her eyes.

Even this brought no dawn of comprehension into Zachary's hard, unhappy eyes. Anne wished she had gone about the matter a little less circuitously. How short a while ago she had been cautiously checking him, holding him off cunningly. Now she began to wonder if she might not have to do the wooing herself.

"Monsieur," she said, presently, "I have

been very frank with you. Will you not be equally frank with me, and tell me why you take such strong exception to what I have said?"

This was direct enough. "And she shall have a direct answer," thought Zachary, his brain working in a vague way through his despair.

"Since you ask — I may say it," he replied, hoarsely. "It's because I love you, — I love you, — and life can be nothing to me without you."

Having thus delivered himself, he got up and turned his back again, and stood looking out of the window.

Before Anne could reply, there came another knock at the door.

"Oh!" she murmured, in a tone of such regret and disappointment that even such dense despair as Zachary's could not wholly miss it. He looked at her with a flash of question as he turned to face the newcomer.

"Who is there?" asked Anne.

"It is I, my daughter. Father Labillois," answered a kind voice. "It is important that I should see you at once, if possible."

"You shall come in, father, of course," she answered, opening the door and pulling him quickly inside, that she might lock it again at once. He looked plain disapproval at the sight of Zachary in this sanctuary, and greeted him with a coldness which Zachary's response fairly matched. Zachary was regarding the good priest now as the person who was to formally give Anne into the hands of De Viron.

"I heard, of course," said Father Labillois, "what led me to conclude that the prisoner had been removed from the loft in good time. But was it absolutely necessary, my daughter, that he should be brought to your own room?"

"Absolutely necessary, father," replied Anne, with a sweetness that somehow contained finality within it.

Father Labillois looked from her joyous face, which had lost every anxious line and now glowed with happy colour, to the iron misery of Zachary's countenance, and felt himself hopelessly at sea. Whatever Anne was doing, plainly the Englishman did not like it; so he felt a little reassured, and allowed himself to smile upon them both.

"I came to warn you, my daughter," said he, "that the time at our disposal for getting Monsieur Cowles safely away has been cut short. Monsieur de Viron has just come back, as you of course know. And he has come with news which makes it most imperative that he should get away to-morrow. His Excellency and he are planning that, if you will consent to its being so hastened, the wedding shall take place to-morrow morning."

As he finished he glanced quickly at Zachary, and saw the lines of his face so deepen that he could not withhold a pang of sympathy. But the next moment his attention was brought sharply back to Anne. She laid her hands on his arm and looked lovingly into his face.

"Dear friend! Tried and faithful friend!" she was saying. "Do not fail me now!"

"I am not likely to *fail* you, Anne," he answered, in a troubled voice, "even when, perhaps, I ought to!"

"Then, father, I will force upon you a confidence that you may not desire," said the girl, looking straight into his eyes. "I will never, never marry the Count de Viron. *I* never agreed to it. I never could love him. I hate

him. No power on earth shall give me to him!"

Father Labillois saw his worst fears realized. His blue eyes glared at Zachary. But before he could say a word Anne spoke again:

"But my uncle shall not shut me up in a convent to make me obey him, father. I have no time for that." Here she dropped his arm, and ran over and stood with downcast eyes and flushing face by Zachary's side. "I have a much better plan."

Zachary's stupidity had forsaken him during the last few moments. His head reeled, as enlightenment came flooding over heart and brain; but he drew the little white figure close, and returned Father Labillois's glare with radiant good-will.

For some seconds the priest was speechless. Then, in a voice of deep indignation, he demanded:

"Who are you, sir, a poor helpless captive in peril of your neck, to take upon yourself the care of such a woman as Mademoiselle de Biencourt?"

"Good father," answered Zachary, his voice trembling, "a captive I am, indeed, for ever

— but hardly helpless, seeing that I may hope for the help of such a man as you, and not so poor, once I get to my own country, but that I may make shift to care for the one woman in the world as well as any count of your country could care for her. I love you for your fears for her, sir — but, believe me, they are very groundless. I have a name to give her that shall not shame her own, and a love to give her that is not altogether poor security for her happiness."

The priest shook his head despairingly. He read humanity well enough to be assured that Zachary spoke the truth. But, added to his fear of the daring experiment, and his religious antagonism to the New Englander, was an ache of loss at the idea that his darling should go where he could not reach her. He expected to go to Quebec himself before long.

"All your great estates would be forfeited, my daughter, if you should be suffered to do this mad thing."

The lovers laughed into each other's eyes.

"You cannot prevent my doing it now, father, dear, because you could not force yourself to betray me. That I know as well as

you do!" said Anne, caressing him with her eyes while she clung to Zachary. "But I cannot go without your blessing — and we must go to-night. Forgive me — and bless me, father!"

"It is something more definite, more indissoluble than your blessing that I'm begging you to give us, father," said Zachary, coaxingly. "Think of the long way we must travel ere we can hope to see priest or parson again!"

"How do you dare ask me to marry the child to a Protestant, to a heretic, as you are?" demanded the priest, sternly. He was getting angry now, as he felt himself in danger of yielding.

At this point Anne slipped from Zachary's arm, and ran and threw both arms around the priest's neck.

"You cannot, oh, father, you *cannot* refuse!" she pleaded, in a whisper at his ear, her eyes shining with tears. The priest put an arm about her, and his kind mouth quivered so that he had no answer for a moment.

"As to that, father," put in Zachary, coming up and standing very close to him on the

other side, "I'm sorry to say I've never been a very good Protestant, and I'm thinking a poor Protestant is not likely to make a good Catholic. But the Church that makes women like Anne and men like you couldn't be very bad for me, could it? If, now, while you're worrying over the question of marrying Anne to me, you could make it convenient to come along with us on the trip we're planning to-night, you might not have to marry her to a Protestant after all! I don't want *her* to be a Protestant, for I wouldn't have so much as a hair of her beautiful head changed."

Father Labillois's heart was now in a dangerously melting mood. He could not help feeling a little good-will, a little impulse of liking, toward this big, frank, boyish fellow, who had made him so much trouble and seemed so joyously unconscious of it. But he still had another card to play, and that a strong trump.

"You are forgetting one thing, Monsieur Cowles," he said. "Anne is a daughter of the Church, through and through. I sincerely do not believe that even you, granting all you say, could keep her happy for long if she felt herself estranged from her faith. Think what

it would mean to take her into your austere and bitter community, where she would be utterly alone, save for you, and where, perhaps, — I do not know, — even you could not protect her from persecution for her creed's sake."

"That's all true, father, I saw it all as soon as you began to speak of it," answered Zachary, thoughtfully. "And Boston *is* no place for her. I have a good deal of property in Baltimore, where her Church is strong. I will take her there, — and you might do worse, father, than come to Baltimore yourself and keep an eye on her. I'm thinking now, when it's too late, how she treated me yesterday, — and I'm likely to have my hands full if I have to look after her all by myself!"

The priest's blue eyes blinked with unnatural rapidity.

"I'll do whatever you wish, my daughter —" he began. But just there his lips quivered again, and speech failed him. He turned and gathered Anne into his arms, and bent his face down over her soft hair, and Anne cried a few happy tears into the broad breast of his cassock. In a moment or two he

recovered himself sufficiently to say to Zachary:

"I may be able before long, my son, to accept your invitation to Baltimore. Be very good to her. She is pure gold."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SANCTUARY OF THE SUNRISE

IT had been reluctantly decided that Anne must appear to fall in with De Viron's change of plan, or run the risk of complicating matters hopelessly. It was obvious that a breach just now would put every one on guard. While Father Labillois went to consult with Gil and Lizette, and see what could be done to speed the preparations, Anne went to the library, and faced her ordeal with as much of her usual gay courage and *esprit* as she could muster. She was tantalizing and wilful, and altogether elusive to De Viron, till she provoked him to some little show of authority, whereat his Excellency wagged his head, and laughingly advised the count that this was a filly to be driven with a light rein. To his Excellency Anne was affectionate and

winning beyond her wont. At the suggestion of having the wedding on the morrow, she protested in vehement confusion, indignantly resenting De Viron's haste and his subordination of her wishes to his own convenience. When, however, his Excellency pressed the point urgently, but without seeming to take De Viron's side, she at last suffered him to persuade her. In that case, however, she insisted that she must have every moment to herself, as she had an infinity of things to do.

"You can spare me a little time this evening, I trust, Anne," said the count.

"Indeed, no, monsieur," she retorted, mockingly. "Do you think a girl has nothing to do when all her arrangements have to be changed at a moment's notice?"

But she flung her arms passionately around her uncle's neck, and kissed him again and again, with tears in her eyes.

"Good night, uncle dear," she murmured, tenderly. "It may be long before I kiss you again for good night!" Then she ran from the room, waving adieux to De Viron from careless finger-tips.

"She is altogether the sweetest and most

loving God ever made," muttered his Excellency, looking after her as she vanished. "But mettlesome, monsieur, and not like others you have known. You will need all your wisdom."

De Viron was still irritated at her waywardness.

"I'll manage her all right, never fear, your Excellency," he answered, setting his jaw a little.

The old soldier eyed him with some amusement.

"Don't be too sure, my boy!" he laughed. "She comes of a stock that's used to having its own way."

That same night at Cheticamp manor-house all was quiet by midnight, for much was to be doing on the morrow. Even De Viron had retired early, and gone to sleep with pleasant anticipations of victory over the enchanting but exasperating girl whom he was to wed. The house slept, and the trees about it slept; and there seemed to be nothing awake but the honeysuckle perfumes and other fairy scents

of the garden, which pulsed hither and thither though no breeze was abroad to stir them.

Behind Cheticamp manor-house, to the north and east, stood a thick grove of fir and spruce, a shield from the winter winds. From the garden and orchard many winding paths led through this grove, converging on the head of a grassy lane, which ran, through a mile of tilled fields, to the edge of the ancient forest. Arriving at the forest, it split into a number of rugged trails, some of them plain enough to be easily followed, others so obscure that only one trained to woodcraft could hope to trace it.

At the head of this lane, in the thick shadows of the grove stood Father Labillois, holding a horse which bore a large bundle on its back. He was waiting patiently, leaning on the neck of his horse, and listening for the sound of approaching footsteps.

The good priest was feeling a little proud of himself. That evening he had done a very crafty thing, which had earned applause from both Zachary, the soldier, and Gil, the woodsman. Armed with two small shoes, one of Mademoiselle's and one of Lizette's, he had

gone to the creek where lay the English boat, and stamped a number of telltale footprints in the mud.

"There's a false trail for them," he had muttered in high satisfaction. Then he had set the boat adrift, on the first of an outgoing tide. He had argued shrewdly that the boat and the sea would be regarded as the fugitives' only probable way of escape, — and that these footprints on the shore would pass for irrefragable evidence.

"And it will be such a comfort, mademoiselle, to Monsieur de Viron," suggested Lizette, piously, at the final council in Mademoiselle's room, "to feel that he knows where you have gone!"

It was about an hour after this that Father Labillois found himself waiting in the shadow of the grove behind Cheticamp. Presently the low, muffled, yet resonant sound of hoofs on the dry spruce-needles caught his ear. He listened anxiously, ready to draw deeper into the shadow. But a soft whistle reassured him, — the long-drawn, plaintive call of the white-throat.

A moment or two later Gil appeared, leading two horses, each with a pack on its back. Gil took off his woollen cap to the priest, and stood taciturn and motionless as an Indian. He could stand for an hour as unstirringly as one of the great tree-trunks among which he spent most of his life. In the woods he could outpoint the bear and the fox in craft.

During the next half-hour Father Labillois walked around his horse several times, and twice carefully readjusted both the bridle and the heavy blanket which had been girt upon the beast's back in place of a saddle; but Gil never moved. At last he drew a long breath, and muttered, "Here they come."

Father Labillois had heard nothing, but Gil's ear had caught the far-off sound of careful footfalls. A minute later there was a faint rustle of skirts, and a whisper, — and Anne and Lizette, followed by Zachary, came up like shadows made palpable, and stopped by the horses. Lizette slipped over, and laid her hand in Gil's.

"Was all well?" asked Father Labillois, in a low voice.

"Well," responded Zachary.

The two girls and Father Labillois mounted in front of the packs, Zachary and Gil walked beside the girls' horses, and all haste was made across the perilous mile of open fields. The smell of dew-wet earth and green barley struck with sharp sweetness upon the fugitives' senses. The fields glimmered mysteriously under the starlight, and far-off tree-tops, projecting over the swell of the land, looked to Anne and Lizette like figures of men stealing up upon them. Down to the right certain vague lumps of blackness, huddled together or trailing off in line, were the houses of Cheticamp village. The wide, breathless, in some dim way menacing picture bit itself into Anne's brain ineffaceably. Not a word was spoken. The feet of the horses, treading on the close grass, made hardly a sound.

At length, — it seemed a long time to Anne, who more than any of the others apprehended pursuit, — the ancient woods received them into covert, and the world of Cheticamp was shut off behind them. Father Labillois now dismounted. The men took the horses by the bridles, and fell into single file, Gil leading. For perhaps a minute the trail was

perceptible to them all, like a very narrow cattle-path; then it dwindled, seemingly, to nothing. But Gil kept on as unhesitatingly as if it were a paved way. The great woods closed them in with their thick silence. For the first time Anne felt secure, and a wave of unspeakable peace seemed to wash deliciously over her. The wet leaves and branches, brushing her ankles, were like kindly little welcoming hands, promising her that all should be well.

To avoid the sweep of low-hanging boughs the girls had to ride with heads bent over their horses' necks, so from time to time Gil would pause, to relieve their strained attitudes. Twice the trail dipped steeply, and they went splashing through shallow brooks that babbled in the dark. Then they came to a third brook, broader than either of the others; and Gil took his course straight down the bed of the stream. The girls could now hold up their heads, and see a strip of starlit sky, a sort of heavenly pathway, right above them. The stream rippled musically all about them, and, invited by its confidential voice, the girls laughed softly, the laughter of unutterable content.

Down this stream they travelled thus for half a mile, or a little more, till the trees opened out ahead, and they saw before them the grayness of a little forest lake. Here Gil turned ashore, the brook having ceased to ripple and its bottom having grown muddy. A patch of wild meadow, waist-deep with grass and flowers, gave them access to a jutting point on the lake beach. And here Gil stopped, pointing to a flat-bottomed boat pulled up on the shore.

When the girls were lifted down, and packs and blankets taken from the horses, Gil turned to Father Labillois.

"It's here, father," said he, regretfully, "that we have to let you go."

"After you have done one thing more for us, father," added Zachary, — "the one thing to make our debt of gratitude huge beyond all hope of repayment!"

"Faith, I'd like to know how I'm to get out of this, and where I'll be when I do get out," exclaimed the priest, as he brought out a little book of offices from inside his cassock.

"I'm going to put you safely on the right road, of course, father," answered the woods-

man. "You know the stretch of open country below Cheticamp, on the road toward St. Ignace? Well, we're not more than half a mile from that open, straight through the woods. I'll put you out there. Then, if you turn these two horses loose (keeping the bridles, which belong to me), they'll find their way to their own pastures before morning, and no one will be any the wiser. And you'll just have an easy ride home."

"There's no help for it," said Father Labillois, sorrowfully.

It was a brief but mystically solemn rite, that marriage in the scented summer dark beside the wide glimmering of the lake. When it was over, there was silence, then farewells that were quiet and hurried because emotion made words seem poor; and in a few minutes the crashing of the horses through the underbrush died into silence. Zachary joyously busied himself with bailing out the boat, drying it with wisps of grass, launching it, and getting it snugly loaded; while the girls — Lizette holding tight to a fold of her mistress's skirt — sat together on a blanket, and watched him happily. Once, a little way

down by the shore, a large fish jumped, at which Lizette, unused to the wilderness sounds, jumped too. Soon afterward, from near the other end of the lake came peal after peal of wild, echoing, melancholy laughter, which made Lizette creep trembling up against Anne's arm, and whisper:

"Mary save us! What is that, madame?"

"That is nothing, child, but a pair of loons calling to each other," answered Anne, laughing at her terror. "They probably have their young ones on this lovely lake, and object to our untimely intrusion."

"It seems to me a very beautiful little lake, sweetheart," exclaimed Zachary, sitting down on the other edge of the blanket, and putting his arm about Anne's shoulders.

As a matter of fact, the lake had low, monotonous shores, and, as lakes go, was altogether lacking in distinction. Nevertheless, Anne honestly agreed with his remark. She fancied she had never before seen so beautiful a lake.

Gil was gone for perhaps three-quarters of an hour. Then he reappeared noiselessly, as if a cloud were to take shape, and paused

just outside the trees, ten paces behind the group on the blanket. Neither Anne or Lizette had heard a sound; but Zachary, without turning his head, said, quietly: "That was quick work for the night woods, my Gil." And Lizette turned quickly with a startled, "Oh, Gil! You are like a ghost!"

"You have good ears, monsieur," said the woodsman, coming up with a grin of high approval on his face.

"You made never a sound," answered Zachary. "But I was on guard. I felt you."

In a few minutes they were afloat on the lake, using canoe-paddles instead of oars. The lake was narrow and crooked, but nearly two miles in length, from head to outlet. The lower end was desolate, studded with black, jutting rocks, and fringed with dead rampikes, bleached and scarred. From the lake, which was fed by several streams, a good body of water flowed off with a swift current, down which the adventurers made great speed. As the black, imminent shores raced up and passed, the girls would sometimes gasp and clutch each other, feeling that they were about to be dashed into a rampart of frowning rock. But ever,

at the last moment, a way opened, and the skilful paddles took it, and the threat slipped harmless by. From time to time they would hear a low thunder ahead of them, which would presently grow to a roar, which sounded terrifying within those narrow banks; and with a little plunge, a dash of spray, they would dart down a short rapid, the rocks gnashing white teeth on either side.

At length a louder clamour sounded ahead of them, and seemed to gallop to meet them, so swift was the stream. The shores were low now, and wider apart. With apprehensive eyes the girls saw before them a wide slope of white, churned, brawling water. Small rocks stood up everywhere, and there seemed to be no way through. The noise now was not deep, like that of the former rapids, but sharper and more vindictive.

"Isn't that pretty bad, Gil?" inquired Anne, too proud to show any dread, but not ashamed to seek information.

"Troublesome, that's all, madame," answered the woodsman, laying down his paddle, seizing the pole, and standing up in the stern.

"All shoal water, so we'll have to drop her through slowly."

Snubbing sharply with the pole, he checked their progress till the shores no longer rushed past, but the boat seemed to be butting its way impetuously up-stream. Gradually Gil worked the boat over, across the foam and tumult, nearly to the farther shore. Then a clear way opened ahead. The waves tossed and foamed, but there were no rocks; and once more the boat slid swiftly downward, pole and paddle together keeping her course true to a hairbreadth. These smaller waves were not, after all, so daunting as the others had been, while even more exciting; and the girls more than once cried out in their wild exhilaration. Twice the boat grated sharply on a hidden rock, and once she so nearly "hung up" that the waves boiled up madly behind her, and almost came over the stern. But with a mighty lunge on the pole Gil shot her over the obstacle. Then a heavy, plunging dip, which sent the spray flying, — and they ran into quiet waters.

From this point onward there was comparatively little current. The river spread itself

out, and wound placidly between low, bushy shores. A pallor crept over the eastern sky, with a sudden touch of chill, a mystic tremor; and all at once, as it seemed, the leaves and twigs on the bushes began to stand out. Tones of green and brown began to differentiate themselves, and wisps of elusive mist appeared on the smooth, dark water. The travellers kept on in wide-eyed silence, as the infinite miracle of the dawn was wrought before them. As the light spread, clarifying till the world seemed to lie in the heart of a vast crystal, the retreating lines of forest and upland came into view, all bathed in lilac opalescence.

All at once, as if suddenly breathed out of heaven, little clouds of aerial rose-colour appeared in the zenith, and three long bars of thin but intense gold shot up from the extreme eastern horizon. The voyagers rounded a sharp bend, — and before them lay another lake much larger than the one they had left. It was wide, and unrippled as fine glass, and over its radiant surface the glory of the day's new birth was mirroring itself in tranquil ecstasy. Gil steered the boat to a little beach, where a screen of low-growing, friendly trees

approached the water. The lake appeared a sanctuary, a holy place, and no one spoke till the boat grated on the beach. Then Gil said, softly, looking at Lizette with shining eyes:

"We may break our fast here, and rest a little while, and get some sleep in safety. To-morrow we shall reach the sea."

THE END.

L. C. Page and Company's Announcement List of New Fiction

The Bright Face of Danger.

By Robert Neilson Stephens, author of "Philip Winwood," "A Gentleman Player," "The Mystery of Murray Davenport," etc. Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

Stephens's most stirring story tells of the adventures of Henri de Launay, son of De Launay de la Tournoire, made famous in "An Enemy to the King." Mr. Stephens has done what Dumas did in "Twenty Years After," except that, unlike the great French novelist, he has written his best story last. Writing, as only he among modern romancers can write, of fair women and brave men, the gay life of the chateaux and the dangers of the road, hairbreadth escapes, thrilling rescues and gallant combat, Mr. Stephens has accomplished, without question, his masterpiece of romantic fiction.

"Mr. Stephens has fairly outdone himself. We thank him heartily. The story is nothing if not spirited and entertaining, rational and convincing. If there were more stories like it, the historical novel would be in no danger of falling into disrepute." — *Boston Transcript.*

"Mr. Stephens has a liberal share of the intangible verve and charm of Dumas, and he is at his best in 'The Bright Face of Danger.' It is a gay, dashing, youthful tale of dangers dire and escapes gallantly won. The situations are combined in fresh and captivating style. Things are kept moving swiftly, and the dénouement is effective." — *Chicago-Record Herald.*

The Prisoner of Mademoiselle. By Charles G. D. Roberts, author of "The Kindred of the Wild," "Barbara Ladd," "The Heart of the Ancient Wood."

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top, illustrated . . $1.50

In this charming tale Mr. Roberts has come back to the field of his first novels, — the land of Acadia. He tells a story which, based on the famous siege of Louisburg, still has plenty of those vibrant nature-notes which have endeared his "Barbara Ladd" to its readers. Add to that scenes of tenseness and thrill which surpass those in "The Forge in the Forest," and one can see that here is a romance worth the name.

The Watchers of the Trails. By Charles G. D. Roberts, author of "Barbara Ladd," "The Kindred of the Wild," etc. With illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull.

Square 12mo, decorative cover $2.00

This is a companion volume to "The Kindred of the Wild," and is another collection of Professor Roberts's characteristic stories of nature and animal life, which stand alone in the world of fiction as absolutely sincere and truthful descriptions of existence in the untamed wilderness. They carry one far from the haunts of convention into the very depths of primeval forces, and present the savage instincts of the beasts of the forests and the elemental problems of living which attend those who live near to nature.

The book is sure to meet the favor accorded its predecessor and companion, of which a few of the criticisms are:

"Professor Roberts has caught wonderfully the elusive individualities of which he writes. His animal stories are marvels of sympathetic science and literary exactness. Bound with the superb illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull, they make a volume which charms, entertains, and informs." — *New York World.*

"Is in many ways the most brilliant collection of animal stories that has appeared. Well named and well done." — *John Burroughs.*

"No more perfect achievement of its kind has come from the hand of man." — *Chicago Tribune.*

"Incomparably the best in literature that has grown up about animals." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

At Home with the Jardines.

By Lilian Bell, author of "Abroad with the Jimmies," "Hope Loring," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . $1.50

Here we have the heroine of "Abroad with the Jimmies" (a book already established in the minds of readers as one of the author's best) back to America, married, and trying to settle down. This book relates her experiences as a honeymooner, a flat-dweller, a housekeeper, and a hostess. Among her guests — as well as counsellors and friends — are her (and the reader's) old friends, the Jimmies, and her vivacious sister, Bee. These and a score of others — of whom the most prominent are Mary Jane, a new type of domestic, and "The Angel" — make up a pleasing group of folk with whom to pass a genial hour or so.

Of "Abroad with the Jimmies," the following are but a few of a great many favorable opinions:

"A deliciously fresh, graphic book. The writer is so original and unspoiled that her point of view has value." — *Mary Hartwell Catherwood.*

"Full of ozone, of snap, of ginger, of swing and momentum." — *Chicago Evening Post.*

". . . Is one of her best and cleverest novels . . . filled to the brim with amusing incidents and experiences. This vivacious narrative needs no commendation to the readers of Miss Bell's well-known earlier books. They will all read it, and they will enjoy it, and that is one of the safest prophecies we have made for some time." — *N. Y. Press.*

The Sign of Triumph.

A Romance of the Children's Crusade. By Sheppard Stevens, author of "I Am the King." Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

This is a romantic story, dealing with the incidents of the Children's Crusade, and depicts the pathetic experiences of that army of infant martyrs to the cause of religion. Interwoven with this account is a delightful romance.

"The author has utilized to unusual effect the picturesqueness and fanaticism of the Crusading children in a story filled with eager charm and stamped with stern truth." — *Boston Transcript.*

The Green Eye of Goona. By Arthur Morrison, author of "The Red Triangle," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, with a frontispiece $1.50

"The Red Triangle" proved to be one of the most popular of the year's fiction. "Better than 'Sherlock Holmes,'" "Not to be laid down till the last word has been reached," "A first-class story of crime and mystery," are a few of the observations made upon it. This new story promises to be of equal popularity.

It deals with the adventures of a famous diamond, "The Green Eye of Goona," mysteriously stolen from an Indian rajah, and supposedly concealed in one of a dozen magnums of Tokay wine. An enterprising young Englishman, Harvey Crook, is the principal seeker for the diamond, and proves himself a worthy disciple of Martin Hewitt and Sherlock Holmes.

Hemming, the Adventurer. By Theodore Roberts. With six illustrations by A. G. Learned.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

The hero of this romance is a typical Englishman, straightforward and manly, with all the charm and fascination of the cultivated man of the world. His adventures are well worth recording, and introduce many phases of life and many types of people. The atmosphere of the book is that of real life, — of things perfectly familiar to the author, of incidents personally known and related in the spirit of remembrance.

The Hound from the North. By Ridgwell Cullom, author of "The Story of the Foss River Ranch."

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

This is a story of adventure and mystery, starting in the famous Klondike region, then shifting to the "great northwest" of Canada. Gold escorts, government detectives, ranchmen, and smugglers all play their part, centring around "The Hound from the North," an original and thrilling, if sinister, sketch of animal life. The heroine is sincere and womanly, and the hero a relief to those surfeited with the ordinary "leading man" of fiction.

An Evans of Suffolk. By Anna Farquhar, author of "Her Boston Experiences," "Her Washington Experiences," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

This is a powerful story of modern life. The principal character is a young woman who marries into a conservative Boston family without explaining her antecedents, and is obliged to exercise all her woman's ingenuity to keep unknown the existence of her father, who is the "black sheep" of a distinguished English family. She gradually becomes involved in deception, which grows more and more difficult to maintain, and which threatens to finally overwhelm her. The plot is strong, and the telling is brilliant, while the book has much of the author's gift of social satire, which was so cleverly displayed in "Her Boston Experiences."

The Motor Pirate. By G. Sidney Paternoster.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, with frontispiece $1.50

Mr. Paternoster, in his new book, "The Motor Pirate," has quite outdistanced all competitors. The story is a rattling good one. Told by a man who is a rich landowner and motor enthusiast, it rushes from incident to incident in an almost breathless fashion. There is a strong love interest in the book, and all the characters are well drawn. Turpin, in truth, has been out-Turpined by Mr. Paternoster, who must be congratulated on a most successful work of fiction.

The Second Mrs. Jim. By Stephen Conrad.

With a frontispiece by Ernest Fosbery.

Large 16mo, cloth decorative $1.00

Here is a character as original and witty as "Mr. Dooley" or the "self-made merchant." The realm of humorous fiction is now invaded by the stepmother.

A shrewd, middle-aged spinster marries a prosperous farmer with two boys, and makes them a model wife and mother. A clever climax is attained when she pulls the oldest boy out of love with the wrong girl and into love with the right one. Much quaint philosophy is mingled with extremely humorous sayings in dialect. The book will be read with many inward chuckles and outward laughs of appreciation.

Azalim: A Romance of Old Judea. By Mark Ashton, author of "She Stands Alone." Illustrated with a colored frontispiece and eight reproductions from rare old plates.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

This is the second of the author's series of novels founded on Biblical history, and has Judea for its background, the infamous Jezebel for its central figure, and her intrigues and ambitions for its motif. It is full of interesting and exciting incidents with vivid descriptions of the life of the times.

"The story is clear-cut and straightforward, and we feel we are breathing the atmosphere of the period. It is brilliant with descriptions, has a wealth of interesting incidents, unique situations and swift action."—*Boston Herald.*

Delightful Dodd. By Elliott Flower, author of "The Spoilsmen," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . $1.50

From the strenuous whirl of politics to the calm of the backwoods is indeed a far cry; but Mr. Flower has shown himself as clever in depicting the life of the Wisconsin farmer and lumberman as in his trenchant portrayal of the doings of the Chicago wards. His principal character, a shrewd old pioneer of the lakes and forests, is declared by those who have read the manuscript of the story, to "give David Harum cards and spades."

Rachel Marr. By Morley Roberts, author of "The Promotion of the Admiral," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

In this novel Mr. Roberts has left the humors and tragedies of the sea for a new field. "Rachel Marr" is a romance full of that atmosphere and spirit which has made Thomas Hardy famous. The book has met with not only popular success in England, where it has gone to a tenth impression, but with artistic success. The *Daily Telegraph*, London's most conservative literary sheet, says that "This novel is one of the most significant productions of the times; it is finely conceived."

Selections from L. C. Page and Company's List of Fiction

WORKS OF ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS

Captain Ravenshaw; OR, THE MAID OF CHEAPSIDE. (40th thousand.) A romance of Elizabethan London. Illustrations by Howard Pyle and other artists. Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

Not since the absorbing adventures of D'Artagnan have we had anything so good in the blended vein of romance and comedy. The beggar student, the rich goldsmith, the roisterer and the rake, the fop and the maid, are all here: foremost among them Captain Ravenshaw himself, soldier of fortune and adventurer, who, after escapades of binding interest, finally wins a way to fame and to matrimony.

Philip Winwood. (70th thousand.) A Sketch of the Domestic History of an American Captain in the War of Independence, embracing events that occurred between and during the years 1763 and 1785 in New York and London Written by his Enemy in War, Herbert Russell, Lieutenant in the Loyalist Forces. Presented anew by ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS. Illustrated by E. W. D Hamilton. Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

"One of the most stirring and remarkable romances that have been published in a long while, and its episodes, incidents, and actions are as interesting and agreeable as they are vivid and dramatic." — *Boston Times.*

The Mystery of Murray Davenport. (30th thousand.) By ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS, author of "An Enemy to the King," "Philip Winwood," etc. Library 12mo, cloth, with six full-page illustrations by H. C. Edwards $1.50

"This is easily the best thing that Mr. Stephens has yet done. Those familiar with his other novels can best judge the measure of this praise, which is generous." — *Buffalo News.*

"Mr. Stephens won a host of friends through his earlier volumes, but we think he will do still better work in his new field if the present volume is a criterion." — *N. Y. Com. Advertiser.*

An Enemy to the King. (60th thousand.) From the "Recently Discovered Memoirs of the Sieur de la Tournoire." Illustrated by H. De M. Young.

Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

An historical romance of the sixteenth century, describing the adventures of a young French nobleman at the Court of Henry III., and on the field with Henry of Navarre.

"A stirring tale." — *Detroit Free Press.*

"A royally strong piece of fiction." — *Boston Ideas.*

"Interesting from the first to the last page." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"Brilliant as a play; it is equally brilliant as a romantic novel." — *Philadelphia Press.*

The Continental Dragoon: A Romance of Philipse Manor House in 1778. (43d thousand.) Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

A stirring romance of the Revolution, the scene being laid in and around the old Philipse Manor House, near Yonkers, which at the time of the story was the central point of the so-called "neutral territory" between the two armies.

The Road to Paris: A Story of Adventure. (25th thousand.) Illustrated by H. C. Edwards.

Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

An historical romance of the 18th century, being an account of the life of an American gentleman adventurer of Jacobite ancestry, whose family early settled in the colony of Pennsylvania.

A Gentleman Player: His Adventures on a Secret Mission for Queen Elizabeth. (38th thousand.) Illustrated by Frank T. Merrill.

Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

"A Gentleman Player" is a romance of the Elizabethan period. It relates the story of a young gentleman who, in the reign of Elizabeth, falls so low in his fortune that he joins Shakespeare's company of players, and becomes a friend and protégé of the great poet.

WORKS OF

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

Barbara Ladd. With four illustrations by Frank Verbeck.

Library 12mo, gilt top $1.50

"From the opening chapter to the final page Mr. Roberts lures us on by his rapt devotion to the changing aspects of Nature and by his keen and sympathetic analysis of human character." — *Boston Transcript.*

The Kindred of the Wild. A Book of Animal Life. With fifty-one full-page plates and many decorations from drawings by Charles Livingston Bull.

Small quarto, decorative cover $2.00

"Professor Roberts has caught wonderfully the elusive individualities of which he writes. His animal stories are marvels of sympathetic science and literary exactness. Bound with the superb illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull, they make a volume which charms, entertains, and informs." — *New York World.*

". . . Is in many ways the most brilliant collection of animal stories that has appeared . . . well named and well done." — *John Burroughs.*

The Forge in the Forest. Being the Narrative of the Acadian Ranger, Jean de Mer, Seigneur de Briart, and how he crossed the Black Abbé, and of his Adventures in a Strange Fellowship. Illustrated by Henry Sandham, R. C. A.

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top $1.50

A romance of the convulsive period of the struggle between the French and English for the possession of North America. The story is one of pure love and heroic adventure, and deals with that fiery fringe of conflict that waved between Nova Scotia and New England. The Expulsion of the Acadians is foreshadowed in these brilliant pages, and the part of the "Black Abbé's" intrigues in precipitating that catastrophe is shown.

The Heart of the Ancient Wood. With six illustrations by James L. Weston.

Library 12mo, decorative cover $1 50

"One of the most fascinating novels of recent days." — *Boston Journal.*

"A classic twentieth-century romance." — *New York Commercial Advertiser.*

A Sister to Evangeline. Being the Story of Yvonne de Lamourie, and how she went into Exile with the Villagers of Grand Pré.

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top, illustrated . . $1.50

This is a romance of the great expulsion of the Acadians, which Longfellow first immortalized in "Evangeline." Swift action, fresh atmosphere, wholesome purity, deep passion, searching analysis, characterize this strong novel.

By the Marshes of Minas.

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top, illustrated . . $1.50

This is a volume of romance, of love and adventure in that picturesque period when Nova Scotia was passing from the French to the English régime. Each tale is independent of the others, but the scenes are similar, and in several of them the evil "Black Abbé," well known from the author's previous novels, again appears with his savages at his heels — but to be thwarted always by woman's wit or soldier's courage.

Earth's Enigmas. A new edition, with the addition of three new stories, and ten illustrations by Charles Livingston Bull.

Library 12mo, cloth, uncut edges $1.50

"Throughout the volume runs that subtle questioning of the cruel, predatory side of nature which suggests the general title of the book. In certain cases it is the picture of savage nature ravening for food — for death to preserve life; in others it is the secret symbolism of woods and waters prophesying of evils and misadventures to come. All this does not mean, however, that Mr. Roberts is either pessimistic or morbid — it is nature in his books after all, wholesome in her cruel moods as in her tender." — *The New York Independent.*

WORKS OF
LILIAN BELL

Hope Loring. Illustrated by Frank T. Merrill.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.50

"Lilian Bell's new novel, 'Hope Loring,' does for the American girl in fiction what Gibson has done for her in art.

"Tall, slender, and athletic, fragile-looking, yet with nerves and sinews of steel under the velvet flesh, frank as a boy and tender and beautiful as a woman, free and independent, yet not bold — such is 'Hope Loring,' by long odds the subtlest study that has yet been made of the American girl." — *Dorothy Dix, in the New York American.*

Abroad with the Jimmies. With a portrait, in duogravure, of the author.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1 50

"A deliciously fresh, graphic book. The writer is so original and unspoiled that her point of view has value." — *Mary Hartwell Catherwood.*

"Full of ozone, of snap, of ginger, of swing and momentum." — *Chicago Evening Post.*

". . . Is one of her best and cleverest novels . . . filled to the brim with amusing incidents and experiences. This vivacious narrative needs no commendation to the readers of Miss Bell's well-known earlier books." — *N. Y. Press.*

The Interference of Patricia. With a frontispiece from drawing by Frank T. Merrill.

Small 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.00

"There is life and action and brilliancy and dash and cleverness and a keen appreciation of business ways in this story." — *Grand Rapids Herald.*

"A story full of keen and flashing satire." — *Chicago Record-Herald.*

A Book of Girls. With a frontispiece.

Small 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.00

"The stories are all eventful and have effective humor." — *New York Sun.*

"Lilian Bell surely understands girls, for she depicts all the variations of girl nature so charmingly." — *Chicago Journal.*

The above two volumes boxed in special holiday dress, per set, $2 50.

The Red Triangle. Being some further chronicles of Martin Hewitt, investigator. By ARTHUR MORRISON, author of "The Hole in the Wall," "Tales of Mean Streets," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1 50

This is a genuine, straightforward detective story of the kind that keeps the reader on the *qui vive.* Martin Hewitt, investigator, might well have studied his methods from Sherlock Holmes, so searching and successful are they.

"Better than Sherlock Holmes." — *New York Tribune.*

"The reader who has a grain of fancy or imagination may be defied to lay this book down, once he has begun it, until the last word has been reached." — *Philadelphia North American.*

"If you like a good detective story you will enjoy this." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"We have found 'The Red Triangle' a book of absorbing interest." — *Rochester Herald.*

"Will be eagerly read by every one who likes a tale of mystery." — *The Scotsman, England.*

Prince Hagen. By UPTON SINCLAIR, author of "King Midas," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1 50

In this book Mr. Sinclair has written a satire of the first order — one worthy to be compared with Swift's biting tirades against the follies and abuses of mankind.

"A telling satire on politics and society in modern New York." — *Philadelphia Public Ledger.*

"The book has a living vitality and is a strong depiction of political New York." — *Bookseller, Newsdealer, and Stationer.*

The Silent Maid. By FREDERIC W. PANGBORN.

Large 16mo, cloth decorative, with a frontispiece by Frank T. Merrill $1.00

A dainty and delicate legend of the brave days of old, of sprites and pixies, of trolls and gnomes, of ruthless barons and noble knights. "The Silent Maid" herself, with her strange bewitchment and wondrous song, is equalled only by Undine in charm and mystery.

"Seldom does one find a short tale so idyllic in tone and so fanciful in motive. The book shows great delicacy of imagination." — *The Criterion.*

The Spoilsmen. By ELLIOTT FLOWER, author of "Policeman Flynn," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

"The best one may hear of 'The Spoilsmen' will be none too good. As a wide-awake, snappy, brilliant political story it has few equals, its title-page being stamped with that elusive mark, 'success.' One should not miss a word of a book like this at a time like this and in a world of politics like this." — *Boston Transcript.*

"Elliott Flower, whose 'Policeman Flynn' attested his acquaintance with certain characteristic aspects of the American city, has written a novel of municipal politics, which should interest many readers. . . . The characters are obviously suggested by certain actual figures in local politics, and while the conditions he depicts are general in large cities in the United States, they will be unusually familiar to local readers. . . . Ned Bell, the 'Old Man,' or political boss; Billy Ryan, his lieutenant; 'Rainbow John,' the alderman, are likely to be identified. . . . and other personages of the story are traceable to their prototypes." — *Chicago Evening Post.*

Stephen Holton. By CHARLES FELTON PIDGIN, author of "Quincy Adams Sawyer," "Blennerhassett," etc. The frontispiece is a portrait of the hero by Frank T. Merrill.

One vol., library 12mo, cloth, gilt top . . . $1.50

"In the delineation of rural life, the author shows that intimate sympathy which distinguished his first success, 'Quincy Adams Sawyer.'" — *Boston Daily Advertiser.*

"'Stephen Holton' stands as his best achievement." — *Detroit Free Press.*

"New England's common life seems a favorite material for this sterling author, who in this particular instance mixes his colors with masterly skill." — *Boston Globe.*

Asa Holmes; OR, AT THE CROSS-ROADS. A Sketch of Country Life and Country Humor. By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON. With a frontispiece by Ernest Fosbery.

Large 16mo, cloth, gilt top $1.00

"'Asa Holmes; or, At the Cross-Roads' is the most delightful, most sympathetic and wholesome book that has been published in a long while. The lovable, cheerful, touching incidents, the descriptions of persons and things are wonderfully true to nature." — *Boston Times.*

A Daughter of Thespis. By JOHN D. BARRY, author of "The Intriguers," "Mademoiselle Blanche," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

"I should say that 'A Daughter of Thespis' seemed so honest about actors and acting that it made you feel as if the stage had never been truly written about before." — *W. D. Howells, in Harper's Weekly.*

"This story of the experiences of Evelyn Johnson, actress, may be praised just because it is so true and so wholly free from melodrama and the claptrap which we have come to think inseparable from any narrative which has to do with theatrical experiences." — *Professor Harry Thurston Peck, of Columbia University.*

"Certainly written from a close and shrewd observation of stage life." — *Chicago Record-Herald.*

The Golden Dog: A ROMANCE OF QUEBEC. By WILLIAM KIRBY. New authorized edition, printed from new plates. Illustrated by J. W Kennedy.

One vol., library 12mo, cloth $1.25

"A powerful romance of love, intrigue, and adventure in the times of Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour, when the French colonies were making their great struggle to retain for an ungrateful court the fairest jewels in the colonial diadem of France. It is a most masterly picture of the cruelties and the jealousies of a maiden, Angelique des Melloises — fair as an angel and murderous as Medea. Mr. Kirby has shown how false prides and ambitions stalked abroad at this time, how they entered the heart of man to work his destruction, and particularly how they influenced a beautiful demon in female form to continued vengeances." — *Boston Herald.*

The Last Word. By ALICE MACGOWAN. Illustrated with seven portraits of the heroine.

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top $1.50

"When one receives full measure to overflowing of delight in a tender, charming, and wholly fascinating new piece of fiction, the enthusiasm is apt to come uppermost. Miss MacGowan has been known before, but her best gift has here declared itself." — *Louisville Post.*

"The story begins and ends in Western Texas. Between chapters, there is the ostensible autobiography of a girl who makes her way in New York journalism. Out of it all comes a book, vivid, bright, original — one of a kind and the kind most welcome to readers of the hitherto conventional." — *New York World.*

The Captain's Wife. By W. CLARK RUSSELL, author of "The Wreck of the Grosvenor." With a frontispiece by C. H. Dunton.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

"Mr. Russell's descriptions of the sea are vivid and full of color, and he brings home to the reader the feeling that he is looking upon the real thing drawn by one who has seen the scenes and writes from knowledge." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"Every page is readable and exciting." — *Baltimore Herald.*

"This story may be considered as one of the best of his excellent tales of the sea." — *Chicago Post.*

"There are suggestions of Marryat in it, and reminders of Charles Reade, but mostly it is Clark Russell, with his delightful descriptions and irresistible sea yarns." — *Phila. North American.*

The Mate of the Good Ship York. By W. CLARK RUSSELL, author of "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," etc. With a frontispiece by C. H. Dunton.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

"One of the breeziest, most absorbing books that have come to our table is W. Clark Russell's 'The Mate of the Good Ship York.'" — *Buffalo Commercial.*

"For a rousing, absorbing, and, withal, a truthful tale of the sea, commend me to W. Clark Russell. His novel, 'The Mate of the Good Ship York,' is one of the best, and the love romance that runs through it will be appreciated by every one." — *Philadelphia North American.*

"Romantic adventures, hairbreadth escapes, and astounding achievements keep things spinning at a lively rate and hold the reader's attention throughout the breezy narrative." — *Toledo Blade.*

The Golden Kingdom. By ANDREW BALFOUR, author of "Vengeance Is Mine," "To Arms!" etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

This is a story of adventure on land and sea, beginning in England and ending in South Africa, in the last days of the seventeenth century. The scheme of the tale at once puts the reader in mind of Stevenson's "Treasure Island."

"Every one imbued with the spirit of adventure and with a broad imaginative faculty will want to read this tale." — *Boston Transcript.*

"'The Golden Kingdom' is the rarest adventure book of them all." — *N. Y. World.*

The Schemers: A Tale of Modern Life.

By EDWARD F. HARKINS, author of "Little Pilgrimages Among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books," etc. With a frontispiece by Ernest Fosbery.

Library 12mo, cloth $1.50

A story of a new and real phase of social life in Boston, skilfully and daringly handled. There is plenty of life and color abounding, and a diversity of characters — shop-girls, society belles, men about town, city politicians, and others. The various schemers and their schemes will be followed with interest, and there will be some discerning readers who may claim to recognize in certain points of the story certain happenings in the shopping and the society circles of the Hub.

"A faithful delineation of real shop-girl life." — *Milwaukee Sentinel.*

"This comes nearer to the actual life of a modern American city, with all its complexities, than any other work of American fiction. The book shows an unusual power of observation and a still more unusual power to concentrate and interpret what is observed." *St. Louis Star.*

The Promotion of The Admiral.

By MORLEY ROBERTS, author of "The Colossus," "The Fugitives," "Sons of Empire," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . $1.50

This volume contains half a dozen stories of sea life, — fresh, racy, and bracing, — all laid in America, — stories full of rollicking, jolly, sea-dog humor, tempered to the keen edge of wit.

"If any one writes better sea stories than Mr. Roberts, we don't know who it is; and if there is a better sea story of its kind than this it would be a joy to have the pleasure of reading it." — *New York Sun.*

"To read these stories is a tonic for the mind; the stories are gems, and for pith and vigor of description they are unequalled." — *New York Commercial Advertiser.*

"There is a hearty laugh in every one of these stories." — *The Reader.*

"Mr. Roberts treats the life of the sea in a way that is intensely real and intensely human." — *Milwaukee Sentinel.*

"The author knows his sea men from A to Z." — *Philadelphia North American.*

Count Zarka. By SIR WILLIAM MAGNAY, author of "The Red Chancellor."

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover, with a striking frontispiece $1.50

"Count Zarka" is a strong, quick-moving romance of adventure and political intrigue, the scene being laid in a fictitious kingdom of central Europe.

"Written with great cleverness."— *New York World.*

"Bright, vivacious, and full of action." — *Louisville Courier-Journal.*

"There is a strange fascination about this tale." — *Bookseller, Newsdealer, and Stationer.*

The Story of the Foss River Ranch. By RIDGWELL CULLOM.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.50

The scene of this story is laid in Canada, not in one of the great cities, but in that undeveloped section of the great Northwest where to-day scenes are being enacted similar to those enacted fifty years ago during the settlement of the great American West.

"The tale is powerful and unusual." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"The body of the story is rounded with plenty of incident and strong character drawing." — *New York World.*

The Golden Dwarf. By R. NORMAN SILVER, author of "A Daughter of Mystery," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover, illustrated . $1.50

"One of the brightest and most original detective stories of the year." — *Brooklyn Eagle.*

"A first-class mystery story." — *Philadelphia Press.*

Alain Tanger's Wife. By J. H. YOXALL, author of "The Rommany Stone," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.50

A spirited story of political intrigue in France. A well-known figure in the military history of France plays a prominent part in the plot — but the central figure is that of the American heroine — loyal, intense, piquant, and compelling.

The Daughter of the Dawn. By R. HODDER.
With 12 full-page illustrations by Harold Piffard.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.50

This is a powerful story of adventure and mystery, its scene New Zealand. In sustained interest and novel plot, it recalls Rider Haggard's "King Solomon's Mines" and "She."

"Enthralling from beginning to end." — *Philadelphia North American.*

"It will appeal to all who enjoy the imaginative order of fiction." — *Outlook.*

"So elaborately and ingeniously drawn out that it is easier to believe it than to find a flaw in its verisimilitude." — *Boston Transcript.*

The Diary of a Year. PASSAGES IN THE LIFE OF A WOMAN OF THE WORLD. Edited by Mrs. CHARLES H. E. BROOKFIELD.

Library 12mo, cloth, decorative cover . . . $1.25

The writer of this absorbing study of emotions and events is gifted with charming imagination and an elegant style. The book abounds in brilliant wit, amiable philosophy, and interesting characterizations. The "woman of the world" reveals herself as a fascinating, if somewhat reckless, creature, who justly holds the sympathies of the reader.

Jarvis of Harvard. By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMANN. Illustrated by Robert Edwards.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative $1.50

A strong and well-written novel, true to a certain side of the college atmosphere, not only in the details of athletic life, but in the spirit of college social and society circles. The local color appeals not only to Harvard men, but to their rivals, the loyal sons of Yale, Pennsylvania, and Princeton.

Lauriel. THE LOVE LETTERS OF AN AMERICAN GIRL. By HERBERT D. WARD.
With a portrait frontispiece in photogravure.

Library 12mo, cloth, gilt top $1.50

"The sincere and unaffected charm of these letters from the pen of a genuine American girl cannot fail to give them an influence which mere love-letters could never exert." — *From a Letter to the Publishers.*